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INDIA;

OR

FACTS

SUBMITTED TO ILLUSTRATE

THE CHARACTER AND CONDITION

OF THE

NATIVE INHABITANTS,

WITH

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORMING

THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

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ac

BY R. RICKARDS, ESQ.

I take goodness in this sense — the seeking the weal of men — which is that the Grecians call *philanthropia*. This, of all virtues and dignities of the mind, is the greatest, being the character of the Deity — and, without it, man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing — no better than a kind of vermin. BACON'S *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 280.

VOL. I.

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INDIA.

PART I.

SEVERAL publications have lately appeared respecting India; but mostly of a nature to gratify literary curiosity. A few only afford detailed information of the actual state and condition of the people. Yet, considering the place we now hold in the administration of that country, the influence and authority of the British name, the vast power of our government, and the consequences, both as to credit and profit, of its being well or ill exercised; there are few subjects that affect more sensibly the interests, as well as the character, of the mother state. History, narrations of remarkable events, descriptions of unknown

countries, researches into the antiquities, the religion, the literature, the philosophy, and the languages, of a distant people are at once amusing and instructive topics ; yet the knowledge to be derived, in these respects, from labours presenting us, after all, with little more, as regards India, than examples of rapine, desolation, and violence, or of absurdity, error, and superstition, is surely of little value, compared with the best means of rescuing existing millions from wretchedness and want ; nor can the glory of discovering, or describing, new countries, equal that of enabling a people to make the most of their possessions, and, through their advancing prosperity and happiness, to promote our own.

The former class of publications have, however, been most favourably received in this country ; and chiefly, if not exclusively, applauded in the most popular journals. With this discouragement in view, and with no pretensions to literary fame, I am still anxious to submit to the consideration of an enlightened public, a few facts relative to India, from a sense of regard, and justice, to a much injured and oppressed people ; and in the hope that the time having again arrived, when discussions regarding India must be renewed, a sympathetic feeling will be excited in quarters

where it may be of practical utility to the cause here espoused.

Having lived twenty-three years in India, and passed much of that time in intimate intercourse with various natives, I have a different opinion of their character, to that given in several printed works. I have constantly seen, in their acts and conduct, the practice of the most amiable virtues. I have experienced, from many, the most grateful attachment. I believe them capable of all the qualities that can adorn the human mind; and though I allow many of their imputed faults, (where is the individual or the nation without them?) I must still ascribe those faults more to the rigour of the despotisms under which they have so long groaned, and which unhappily we have but slenderly alleviated, than to natural depravity of disposition, or to any institutions peculiar to themselves.

It should also be remembered that no small portion both of the wealth, and fame, of this country has been acquired through the means of native Indians. Justice and gratitude, therefore, require of us to make them the best returns in our power. Under the peculiar circumstances, too, of our own country, and the apparently united exertions of our faithful friends, and grateful allies, on the continent

of Europe, to drive our commerce and manufactures from their shores, who would not gladly see fresh channels cleared, to relieve existing difficulties, or to disarm the efforts of neighbouring malignity? The golden dreams that have deluded so many speculators to fancy the provinces of South America, and even the interior of Africa, to be filled with interminable resources for the immediate consumption of British goods, have now vanished; but fields of better prospect are still within our reach. In India, if any where, can these flattering expectations be at all realized. In India, more than could have been expected has already resulted from the few privileges so reluctantly conceded to the free trade by the act of 1813. In India, commercial treasures exist, of which very inadequate conceptions have yet been formed in Britain; the avenues to which may be further widened at the pleasure of the British Legislature; but will be again contracted, if the suggestions of prejudice, or self-interest, be allowed to prevail over the dictates of a sounder policy.

In this country, I have found erroneous impressions to prevail, very generally, as to

The casts of the natives of India;

The unalterable simplicity of their food, and habits; and,—

The condition of the people under the Company's government.

The two first are supposed to be regulated beyond all human power of change, by the religion of the natives; and the latter inferred from the accounts of authors, and others returned from India, after a long residence there; and the conclusions hence drawn are, either that improvement is hopeless in so artificial and immutable a state of society; or, that prosperity has advanced, as far as it can go, under the *wise*, *just*, and *lenient* administration of the British government.

Correct notions on these heads being indispensable to a sound decision on the grand question regarding India, which must shortly be brought before parliament, I shall consider them separately.

SECTION I.

CASTS OF THE NATIVES OF INDIA.

THE authors who treat of India, together with most of those who return from that country, roundly state, and their readers, and hearers here, consequently believe, that the population of India is divided into four great

classes, *Brahmen*, *Cshatrya*, *Vaisya*, and *Soodra*.* The first is the sacerdotal class; the second, military, or appointed to defend the people; the business of the third commerce, lending at interest, agriculture, and keeping herds of cattle; and, of the fourth, to serve the higher classes.

To quote one or two respectable writers, for all, on this head: "The very structure and arrangement of society itself is, in India, formed by the religious system, which there- interferes with every temporal as well as spiritual concern of its professors. It thus lays, in its very foundation, *the grand obstacle to every improvement of the condition of the people.* It has divided the WHOLE COMMUNITY *into four great classes*, and stationed each class between certain walls of separation, which are impassable by the purest virtue, and by the most conspicuous merit. The institution of casts therefore may be regarded as the cause why civilization had so early stopped in India; and why the different attainments made progressively by other nations, are not found among the Hindoos, whose manners have

* These are also written *Brahmin*, *Khatry* or *Khetry*, *Vyse* or *Byse*, *Sooder* or *Soodera*.

" been wholly stationary from the earliest " ages to the present times. It is, however, " far easier to ascertain the wide and baneful " influence of such a system on the enterprise " and improvement of society, than to dis- " cover any adequate or safe means, by which " this immense Colossus of superstition may " either be weakened or overthrown." Dr. Tenant quotes a passage from Mr. Cockburn's Essay, which gained the Buchanan prize at Cambridge, in confirmation of this view of Indian Society, and adds to that essay, " Thus hope and fear, the two great stimu- " lants of human exertion, are entirely taken " away. Such a religious obligation is per- " haps calculated to preserve internal peace; " but while it thus assists the first steps to- " wards civilization, *it so debases the mind, and* " *lulls it to so languid a repose, that all the* " *higher approaches are entirely precluded.*"

In like manner, the author of the History of British India, in the Asiatic Annual Register, writes of the Hindoo system as a "*stupendous fabric of superstition,*" and informs us that " the Hindoo people have been " divided, from time out of memory, into four " distinct classes or orders, each of which pos- " sesses its separate immunities and appro- " priate laws, and none of which are permit-

" ted to intermarry, or to have any further " connexion with one another than the fel- " lowship of custom, and the communion of " faith. These orders are denominated the " *Brahman*, the *Cshatrya*, the *Vaisy*, and the " *Sudra*.

" It is declared, in the *Vedas*, that this " division of society was ordained by God at " the creation of the world, and that any viola- " tion of its radical principles would be at- " tended with the greatest misery in this life, " and with the most terrible punishment here- " after. This ordinance the Brahmans are " instructed to engrave on the hearts of the " people, and to call forth their reverence for " it by every means that can engage their " interests, or awaken their fears.

" With this view, theology was not only in- " terwoven with the whole code of civil and " criminal law, but was also mingled with the " very habits, and made to sanction the mi- " nutest actions, of life. And in order to pre- " serve and perpetuate the paramount ascen- " dancy of the system, its ministers were en- " dowed with more than mortal privileges, and " the priestly office rendered hereditary."*

* Dr. Tenant, and the author of the History in the Asiatic Register, are here quoted, to shew the influence of this error on

Not merely have writers given in to this prejudice, but, what is of greater importance

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the minds of learned writers, who had actually visited the spot. It is consequently less surprising that writers at home should be misled by it. We accordingly find the same argument held by Dr. Robertson, Mr. Mill, and other authors of the highest class; and by many writers of subordinate note.

Of Mr. Mill's History it is impossible to speak otherwise than in terms of high admiration. The work is profound, instructive, and for the most part accurate; but being founded on authorities, and not the result of personal observation (Mr. Mill never having been in India), it is not surprising he should have been misled as to this particular fact.

In the deep researches prosecuted by Mr. Mill into the histories of the various nations and tribes of antiquity, he has discovered, in many instances, a classification of the people similar to that of Hindostan (Mill, vol. i. p. 107.) Millar, in his Historical View of the English Government, also adverts to the same fact; and observes that this distribution of the people into clergy, military, husbandmen, and artificers, is to be found not only in all European nations, but in other ages, and in very distant parts of the globe; adding, "the establishment "of the four great castes in the country of Hindostan is "precisely of the same nature."—Millar, Book I. chap. xi.

Mr. Mill is of opinion that this natural distribution of a people into classes may be considered as the first step in the division of labour and employments, and is a necessary consequence of the cultivation of land; since every individual, or every family, in the roaming or pastoral state, provides for itself all the commodities with which it is supplied. That this distribution of a people into classes in the early stages of civilization should be the result of primitive political association, is natural enough. The classes of clergy, military, hus-

to India, the rulers of that country have adopted, and strenuously maintain, the same errors.

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bandmen, and craftsmen, are all that is required for the beginnings of civilized life. They may be considered as generic orders, from which various branches are found to arise, and to flourish, in more advanced periods. All learning and science were originally confined to the clergy, who may therefore be considered as the root of the learned professions—from the military, sprung the aristocracy—and as husbandmen, and craftsmen, were the first sellers of their own wares, the whole commercial and trading community may be said to have branched out of the two last-mentioned classes. All this seems to be a natural arrangement, or distribution, which would take place in any progressive society, without the aid of "Divine legislators." In the case of Hindooism, it is possible enough that there may have been a similar classification, on the first emerging of the people, *in small numbers*, from the pastoral state; and that a legislator may have thereon founded a code of laws, which a superstitious reverence may have afterwards caused to be perpetuated. The error lies in supposing that the division of such an immense population as the inhabitants of Hindostan into four castes ever did, or ever could, exist in the state in which authors describe it; or that the religion of the mass, *as now constituted*, is an absolute bar to the progress of improvement; or binds them down, as slaves, to the observance of minute ceremonies, and rites, which no individual of the community dares, under the severest penalties, to violate. It will presently be seen, that the great mass of Hindoos, throughout India, consists of mixed tribes of innumerable denominations, and tied down by no restraints which are not imputable to poverty, ignorance, and despotic power; and which the diffusion of knowledge, and liberal institutions, would speedily dispel.

In a letter dated 10th January 1810, to the Bombay government, the honourable Court of Directors, commenting on a proposal submitted to them for gradually lessening the burden of land taxation in India, and to make the experiment, in the first instance, on the small island of *Salsette*, have the following paragraph, which is not only curious for the doctrines it contains, but for a remarkable instance of literary embezzlement—the honourable Court having borrowed the words of another high authority, the Edinburgh Review, to state their position; whilst the inference drawn from it is directly opposed to that of the authors, whose text they have thus condescended to appropriate. The sentiments of these two high authorities being of importance to the present question, the reader will be better able to compare and judge of their merits, by seeing them stated in opposite columns.

COURT OF DIRECTORS' LETTER, paragraph 162.

"There thus arises a strong presumption, *à priori*, that a system of finance, which might be well adapted to a nation highly enlightened, and far advanced in the career of civilization, would be unsuitable to a people, who, though not barbarous, are certainly ignorant; and whose poverty is *not the result of a faulty and short-sighted administration*, but of deep-rooted prejudices, and habits, which, while they remain unshaken, must, by limiting their wants, for ever restrain their industry; oppose the accumulation of wealth; and indeed are altogether incompatible with the existence of a prosperous and flourishing country.

"*The artificial and unnatural division of a people into casts is perhaps the most effectual method that could be devised by the ingenuity of man to check their improvement, and repress their industry. It is so diametrically opposed to the strongest principles of our*

EDINBURGH REVIEW, vol. iv. p. 316.

"*The artificial and unnatural division of a people into distinct classes is perhaps the most effectual method which could have been devised by the ingenuity of man to check their improvement and repress their industry. Indeed, the natural operation of such an Insti-*

nature, that, wherever such a distinction exists, and is rigidly observed, it is impossible for enterprise to thrive; and it is altogether vain to talk of counteracting its mischievous tendency by any code of fiscal regulation. Did it never occur then, when recommending a system of taxation, founded upon the established order of nature, that this order has been so much disturbed, in those countries where the system is wished to be introduced, as to render it wholly inapplicable to their present situation? Or, if this did not escape observation, is it possible to imagine, that an alteration in the revenue system, now in force, would have the effect of completely changing the character and habits of the people, and new-modelling the whole mis-shapen structure of society, in defiance of a strong host of prejudices of every description, arrayed against innovation, and resolute to maintain what, from age to age, they have been accustomed to venerate?"

tution is so diametrically opposite to, and incompatible with, the strongest principles of our nature, that we are inclined to believe, that its existence (in a perfect state) is altogether ideal, and, if it had ever been completely carried into practice, the baneful effect would have been so immediate, that the total annihilation of public spirit and enterprize, would have been the inevitable consequence.

We, therefore, cannot help doubting, that most authors have, from various obvious reasons, been led to exaggerate a little in their description of this phenomenon, in the constitution of Hindoo society. We are the more inclined to adopt this opinion, as we find that many intelligent writers do not, by any means, confirm the perfect separation of these casts, in their intercourse with society; and that it is to be remarked, that the latter authors, who have had the best opportunities of observing with accuracy, are those who have given us this more probable account.

In the preceding extracts, the Edinburgh

Reviewers, with their usual acute discrimination, draw the only accurate conclusion as to the state of Indian society; and however weighty the authority to which I stand opposed, I hope at least to be able to prove, in the following pages, that a reform of the present intolerable land tax of India, would, with other measures, occasion a most material change and improvement in the "mis-shapen " structure of that society."

If indeed the honorable Court's were the true view of the constitution of Indian society, there could be but one opinion as to the impracticability of its improvement; but the mysterious account given to us of the quadruple institution of casts is no better than a fable; and the arrayed hosts of prejudices, resolute to maintain this fancied object of their veneration, may therefore be viewed as a pretty amplification of the tale. The position contains in fact a threefold error. In the first place, *no such quadruple division of the whole community exists, and perhaps never did exist;* and the great wonder, in this case, is, that a prejudice should have had such long and universal currency, even among men who must have had daily proofs before their eyes of its fallaciousness. It is also erroneous in supposing the four enumerated

casts to have been divided by impassable walls of separation; for it will be seen immediately, that a complete intermixture of these very casts is recorded to have taken place from the earliest times; and thirdly, that the ordinary pursuits and occupations of life were at all times, generally speaking, open to the whole of them.

In Mr. Halhed's translation of the Gentoo code of laws, we have a preliminary discourse by the learned Pundits, who compiled the original work; in which it is stated, that for some time after the creation, things went on so admirably, under this quadruple division of casts, that there was neither magistrate, nor punishment; neither injustice, oppression, nor crime; but, in process of time, lust, and anger, and avarice, and folly, and arrogance, and drunkenness, became so predominant, as to withhold men from actions of piety, and to lead them to all wickedness; and, thus employed in occupations of debauchery and iniquity, they sunk into the licentiousness of eating things forbidden them to eat, and uttering words forbidden them to utter.

During this time of universal impiety and sin, an intermixture of the tribes took place; and from intermarriages, and illegal connexions, of the four principal tribes arose

a host of mixed tribes, under the general denomination of *Barrun Sunker.** The *Barrun Sunker* is described as being composed of several primitive mixed tribes; and these are divided into three classes, or sets; many of which in the "Gentoo Code" bear different names, and are of different occupations, to those given in the "laws of *Menu*, or *Manavah Dherma Sastra.*" It is added, that a bird *(keroon)* brought a man from *Shakud deep*, and set him down in this world *(Jumbo deep)*; whence sprung the tribe *Deiool;* from the admixture of which with the *Vaisya*, sprung another set of mixed tribes; seven of these are enumerated, in addition to the *Deiool* tribe; concluding with the words "and such "kind of tribes (as if many more were pro-"duced) are called *Muluch.*" "*Muluch* are "such tribes as eat forbidden food, and to "whom permitted, and forbidden, meats are "equal."

The *Manavah Dherma Sastra*, or the laws of *Menu*, son of *Brahma*, translated by Sir William Jones, contains a still more authentic

* The author of the History of British India, above quoted, introduces the "*Barrun Sunker*," as "an *adventitious tribe*," tacked on, as it were, to the four great classes, and "composed of artizans." Asiatic Register, vol. i.

account of the original intermixture of the classes. In the chapter on the mixed classes, we have the names of 60 mixed and degraded tribes; besides 30, whose names are not given. The mixed tribes are such as sprung from intermixture, whether in the direct, or inverse, order of the four pure tribes, *Brahmen*, *Cshatrya*, *Vaisya*, and *Sudra;* i. e. by fathers of one tribe, and mothers of another; and from endless intermixture of these impure tribes. Of these it is remarked, in verse 40; "These, *among various mixed classes*, have been described by their several fathers and mothers," as if many more, than those enumerated, did at this time exist.

The degraded tribes are descendants of the three superior, or as they are commonly called, TWICE BORN, tribes, *Brahmen*, *Cshatrya*, and *Vaisya;* but become outcast, from having neglected the proper duties, and religious observances, prescribed for these casts. Of these, it is added, in verse 46, "Those sons of the TWICE BORN, who are said to be degraded, and who are considered as low born, shall subsist only by such employments as the twice born despise."

The employments allowed to these mixed and impure casts, may be said to be every description of handicraft, and occupation, for

which the wants of human society have created a demand. Though many seem to take their names from their ordinary trade or profession; and some, such as the *Chantala*, and *Swapaca*, and *Vaideha*, have duties assigned them too low, and disgusting, for any others to perform, but from the direst necessity; yet no employment, generally speaking, is forbidden to the mixed and impure tribes, excepting three of the prescribed duties of the sacerdotal class; viz. teaching the *Vedas*, officiating at a sacrifice, and receiving presents from a pure-handed giver; which three are exclusively *Brahminical.*

Mr. Colebrook has also given a clear and methodical arrangement of the Indian classes, in a paper on this subject contained in the fifth volume of the Asiatic Researches, taken from a work called the *Jatimala.** He first enumerates six principal tribes (besides others) as springing from the four superior ones in the *direct* order of the classes, viz.: —

By a Brahman	on a	Cshatrya	Woman
Ditto	..	Vaisya	Ditto
Ditto	..	Sudra	Ditto

* Mr. Colebrook mentions "the *Jatimala*, or garland of classes—an extract from the *Rudra-Yaṃala Tantra*—as corresponding better with usage, and received opinions, than the ordinances of *Menu*, and the great *Dherma-purana.*"

By a Cshatrya on a Vaisya Woman
.. Ditto .. Sudra Ditto

By a Vaisya on a Sudra Woman

And six others in the *inverse* order, viz. :—
By a Sudra on a Brahman Woman
.. Ditto .. Cshatrya Ditto
.. Ditto .. Vaisya Ditto

By a Vaisya on a Brahman Woman
.. Ditto .. Cshatrya Ditto

By a Cshatrya on a Brahman Woman

A *third* set of classes originate from the intermarriages of the 1st and 2nd set.

A *fourth* set from intermixture of the several classes of the 2nd set.

A *fifth* set from the intermarriages of the 2nd and 3rd set.

A *sixth* set from intercourse between classes of the 2nd and 4th set.

"*Menu* adds to these classes four sons of outcasts."

"The Tantra enumerates *many other classes*, which must be placed in lower sets."

Mr. Colebrook adds, that the *Jatimala* expressly states the number of 42 mixed classes, springing from the intercourse of a man of inferior class, with a woman of superior class;

that is, in the *inverse* order of the classes. Add, to these, the number which must have similarly sprung from intercourse in the *direct* order of the classes; and the hosts arising from further intermixture of the numerous descendants of both; and we may safely concur in Mr. Colebrook's conclusion, that "the subdivisions of these classes have further "multiplied distinctions *to an endless variety.*" As a proof he mentions one of their tribes, the *Cayastha,* of which no less than 83 subdivisions are to be traced in Bengal.

On the professions and employments of the several classes, Mr. Colebrook gives the following accurate statement.

"A *Brahman,* unable to subsist by his du- "ties, may live by the duty of a soldier; if he "cannot get a subsistence by either of these "employments, he may apply to tillage and "attendance on cattle, or gain a competence "by traffick, avoiding certain commodities. A "*Cshatrya* in distress, may subsist by all these "means; but he must not have recourse to the "highest functions. In seasons of distress a "further latitude is given. The practice of "medicine, and other learned professions, "painting, and other arts, work for wages, "menial service, alms, and usury, are among "the modes of subsistence allowed both to the

" *Brahman* and *Cshatrya*. A *Vaisya*, unable " to subsist by his own duties, may descend " to the servile acts of a *Sudra:* and a *Sudra*, " not finding employment by waiting on men " of the higher classes, may subsist by han- " dicrafts ; principally following those mecha- " nical operations, as joinery and masonry, " and practical arts, as painting and writing, " by which he may serve men of superior " classes ; and although a man of a lower " class is in general restricted from the acts of " a higher class, the *Sudra* is expressly per- " mitted to become a trader, or a husbandman.

"Besides the particular occupation assigned " to each of the mixed classes, they have the " alternative of following that profession, which " regularly belongs to the class, from which " they derive their origin on the mother's side ; " those at least have such an option, who are " born in the direct order of the classes. *The* " *mixed classes are also permitted to subsist by* " *any of the duties of a Sudra, that is, by menial* " *service, by handicrafts, by commerce, and by* " *agriculture.* Hence it appears, that almost " every occupation, though regularly it be the " profession of a particular class, is open to " most other classes ; and that the limitations, " far from being rigorous, do in fact reserve " only the peculiar profession, that of the

" *Brahmana*, which consists in teaching the " *Veda*, and officiating at religious ceremo- " nies."

We have thus the highest existing authority for utterly rejecting the doctrine of the whole Hindoo community "being divided into four casts;" and of their peculiar prerogatives being guarded inviolate by "impassable walls of separation." It is also clear, that the intermixture of casts had taken place, to an indefinite extent, at the time when the *Dherma Sastra* was composed, which Sir William Jones computes to be about 880 years B. C.; for those laws are obviously addressed, and applied, to a society in a mature state of existence; and not to one about to be created, or formed. The work refers, in many places, to past times; and to events, which a course of time only could have brought about. The origin of the intermixture is therefore lost in the remotest and obscurest antiquity; and having been carried on through a long course of ages, a heterogeneous mass is everywhere presented to us, in these latter times, without a single example in any particular state, or kingdom, or separate portion of the Hindoo community, of that quadruple division of casts, which authors, and even the rulers of India, have so confidently insisted upon. Their "im-

mense colossus of superstition" thus melts, upon the touch of scrutiny, into a mere phantasm; and the pretended insuperable barrier to the progress of improvement is little better than the airy fabric of a vision, which, if it ever did exist, has certainly, in these days, left not a wreck behind.

The *Dherma Sastra* so far confirms the assigned causes of the intermixture of casts, given in Mr. Halhed's translation, as to say, that while Vena* had sovereign power, "he, possessing the whole earth, and thence only called the chief of sage monarchs, gave rise to a confusion of classes, when his intellects became weak through lust."

There are nevertheless texts in the same *Sastra* of a different tendency, and of importance to be considered in this question.

The texts called "bridal" contain among others the following verses:

12. "For the *first* marriage of the TWICE BORN classes, a woman of the same class is recommended; but for such as are impelled by inclination to *marry again*, women in the direct order of the classes are to be preferred.

13. "A *Sudra* woman must only be the wife of a *Sudra;* she, and a *Vaisya*, of a *Vaisya;* they two, and a *Cshatrya*, of a

* In Halhed's translation he is called Bein.

Cshatrya; those two, and a *Brahman*, of a *Brahman.*"

14. "A woman of the servile class is not mentioned, *even in the recital of any ancient story*, as the first wife of a Brahman, or of a Cshatrya, though in the greatest difficulty to find a suitable match." *

In specifying the various causes, for which wives may be legally superseded by other wives, it is added, "a beloved and virtuous wife, though afflicted with illness, must never be disgraced; though she may be superseded by another wife with her own consent."

85. "When TWICE BORN men take wives *both of their own class and others*, the precedence, honor, and habitation of those wives must be settled according to the order of their classes."†

In another part it is enacted, namely—

20. "Those whom the TWICE BORN beget on women of equal classes, but who perform not the proper ceremonies of assuming the

* Sir W. Jones, vol. iii. p. 121.

* Sir William Jones, vol. iii. p. 346. There are several other passages in this code, where the polygamy, in former times, of the twice born classes is referred to, and where they are mentioned as having wives of other classes, besides their own.

thread, and the like, people denominate *Vraty*, or excluded from the *Gayatri*."

21. "From such an outcast *Brahman* springs a son of a sinful nature, who, in different countries, is named a *Bhurgacantaca*, an *Avantya*, a *Vatadhana*, a *Sushpada*, and a *Saicha*."

22. "From such an outcast *Cshatrya*, comes a son called a *Jhalla*, a *Malla*, a *Nech'hire*, a *Nata*, a *Carana*, a *C'hasa*, and a *Dravina*."

23. "From such an outcast *Vaisya*, is born a son, called a *Sudhanwan*, *Charya*, *Carasha*, *Vyanman*, *Maitra* and *Satwata*."*

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64. "Should the tribe sprung from a *Brahman* by a *Sudra* woman, produce a succession of children by the marriages of its women with other *Brahmans*, *the low tribe shall be raised to the highest in the seventh generation*."

65. "As the son of a *Sudra* may thus attain the rank of *Brahman*, and as the son of a *Brahman* may sink to a level with *Sudras*, even so must it be with him who springs from a *Cshatrya*, even so with him who was born of a *Vaisya*." †

* Sir William Jones, vol. iii. p. 386.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 392.

The first series of the preceding texts refers to legal marriages, through which an intermixture of tribes, in the direct order of the classes, must have taken place to a considerable extent; and would alone have produced, in the lapse of ages, a vast population of new tribes, even though no illicit intermixture* had occurred. The second and third series refer to the means, through which the twice born have sunk to the level of *Sudras*, and the base born been raised to higher ranks. Considering, therefore, these various causes to have been in active operation, through many successive centuries, may we not be justified in at least suspecting, that the taint of admixture has pervaded all the primary classes; and—what with debasement on the one hand, and exaltation on the other—that none have been, in fact, able to preserve inviolate their original purity?

The Sacerdotal, whether really pure or impure, is still a distinct class; and, considering its uses and influences in society, holds pre-

* In Guzerat there is a tribe of "unfortunate Hindoos, who, born in illicit love, have thereby lost the rank of their respective parents, and without claim to enter any of the *Vurrum Sunker* or mixed classes, as anciently arranged and avowed, form a society of their own."—Drummond, Gloss.

This tribe is numerous, and called *Pancholee*.

cisely that rank, which naturally might be expected, in the midst of privileges and prerogatives willingly conceded, and never questioned, by a superstitious multitude; and as the *Brahmans* no longer mix, as formerly, with the base born tribes, they pretend at least to be pure descendants of their purest ancestors. Mr. Colebrook enumerates, however, 168 subdivisions, or families, of the Brahminical class in Bengal; and notices distinctions of rank among them, which are considered of great importance, and were formerly settled by a prince, who reigned in the 12th century of the Christian æra. Whether this settlement of rank, and precedence, originated, in any degree, from these tribes or families not being all of equal purity, is not mentioned.

In Mr. Colebrook's enumeration of Indian classes, genuine *Cshatryas*, *Vaisyas*, or *Sudras*, are not noticed, as constituting any considerable part of the present population of Bengal. The *Rajaputras*, or *Rajapoots*, pretend to be genuine *Cshatryas*—their warlike habits may be the only basis of this pretension; for the *Rudra Yamala Tantra* expressly says of them:—

"The origin of *Rajaputras* is from the *Vaisya* on the daughter of an *Ambasht'ha*.

Again, thousands of others sprung from the foreheads of cows, kept to supply oblations."*

Among the numerous castes mentioned by Dr. Buchanan, in his account of Mysore, he names two; one as being of the *Vaisya* tribe, and the other pretending to be so; but no proof is adduced of the genuineness of the former. The same may be said of the Banyans generally.

The CASANA or CAYASTHA, and the GOPA tribes, pretend also to be genuine *Sudras;* and some authorities are said to countenance the pretension; but others, including *Menu*, expressly ascribe the origin of a CASANA to a *Vaisya*, by a woman of the *Sudra* class; and a *Gopa*, to a *Vaisya* father, by a *Cshatrya* girl.

It would therefore seem that the Hindoo

* Asiatic Register, vol. v. p. 57.

In the accounts given to us of the *Rajepoot* principalities, several casts are enumerated: the *Rhatore, Seesodyah, Kutchore, Adda Bawtee*, and *Jadoo*, who intermarry. The *Batties* too, formerly *Rajapoots*, now *Mussulmans*, also very generally take *Rajapoot* wives. There are likewise distinctions among the *Rajapoots* of high and low castes; and essential differences are noticed in the general appearance, stature, size, and mental energies, of the different casts. Female infanticide is practised by the *Kutchore* and *Rattore Rajepoots*, who must consequently supply themselves with wives from other tribes.

community, as well in the Bengal provinces, as in every other part of India, is composed chiefly, if not entirely, first of the Brahminical class, whence the priesthood is supplied; secondly, of innumerable mixed tribes, which constitute the great mass of the population. I have never met with a person who could prove himself a genuine *Cshatrya*, *Vaisya*, or *Sudra;* whilst, of those who pretend to be of pure descent, *Brahmins*, and other respectable and intelligent Hindoos, have assured me, that they have no right to the distinction; that the genuine tribes above named are extinct; and their descendants in this generation all of mixed blood. If, however, any do now exist, they must be too thinly scattered to affect the general interests of society by their privileges or numbers. Certain it is, that their respective professions are usurped, every where, by the mixed classes. A real *Cshatrya* prince is not to be found in these days; all the greater princes of India, excepting the *Paishwa*, a *Brahmin*, are base born; while the ranks of every army in India are unquestionably filled with soldiers of all denominations and casts. In like manner do all descriptions of casts follow the allotted profession of the *Vaisya*, and *Sudra;* and fill every

branch of agriculture, commerce, handicraft, and menial service.

Mr. Colebrook, adverting to the former marriages of *Brahmins* with women of lower classes, says "such marriages are considered as illegal in the present age." *Menu*, however, expressly sanctions these unions with genuine *Cshatryas*, *Vaisyas*, and *Sudras;* but if these tribes no longer exist, it is easy to account for the aversion of the *Brahmins* to intermarry with the tribes whom they consider to be still baser born ; * and for which there is

* In the fifth volume of the "Asiatic Researches" there is a paper by the late Mr. Duncan, entitled "Historical Remarks on Malabar," in which an account is given of the singular laws of inheritance in that province, including the right of succession to the rajaships or petty sovereignties. All the rajas or princes are sons of Brahmins by princesses of the different *colgums*, or palaces; and the marriages of these Brahmins, if connexions of limited duration can be so called, must, according to *Menu*'s definition of pure cast, be considered to be with women of mixed, and therefore base blood. When Mr. Duncan therefore mentions these rajas, as being "mostly of the Khetrie, or second tribe of Hindoos," he must have overlooked this extraordinary intermixture, which, according to the laws of Menu, would stamp both the Brahmins and their issue with the stigma of impurity. The *Namboory* Brahmins of Malabar are consequently viewed as such, by the other Brahmins of India.

no express sanction, I believe, in the laws of *Menu*, son of Brahma.

Be this as it may, the great body of Hindoos, in India, is composed of mixed tribes, to whom, as Mr. Colebrook justly observes, almost every occupation, save the sacerdotal, is open.

Some authors, conceiving this mass of people to be only separate parts of the *Sudra* class, from the general denomination of *Sudra* being commonly applied to all the mixed tribes, still represent the respective professions of the tribes to be invariably settled by law, and consequently hereditary; but this also is an inaccurate view of the case. The laws of *Menu* ascribe professions to some of the casts; but there is no exclusive limitation of duties to particular casts. The oldest Sanscrit authorities, indeed, differ as to the profession of some of the casts. The law being vague and uncertain, a rigorous observance of it becomes impracticable. Professions are more or less hereditary, from custom, in all countries, and in poor communities are the most likely to descend uninterruptedly from father to son; but Mr. Colebrook's information on this head is the most accurate, viz. that "occupations, "though regularly they be the profession of

" particular classes, are open to most others." I have myself seen carpenters of five or six different casts, and as many different bricklayers, employed on the same building. The same diversity of casts may be observed among the craftsmen in dock yards, and all other great works; and those, who have resided for any time in the principal commercial cities of India, must be sensible, that every encreasing demand for labor, in all its different branches and varieties, has been speedily and effectually supplied, in spite of the tremendous institution of casts; which we are taught to believe so impassable an obstruction to the advancement of Indian industry.

The respectable author, I have before quoted, who ascribes the stationary state of of society in India to the inviolable institution of casts, adduces an instance of encreasing prosperity, which it is rather surprising should not have excited some doubt in his own mind, as to the alleged efficacy of this favourite doctrine. Speaking of the three presidencies, Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, "These " cities, (he says,) have continued uniformly to " thrive and encrease under their new mas- " ters, *in spite of all the arguments that have* " *been urged to prove that it was impossible.*

" The last mentioned city in particular, from " having been lately a *village* so *unimport-* " *ant*, as to be wholly passed over in the " assessments for the imperial revenue, as " stated in the Ayeen Aebery, has in about " half a century arisen to a population of *up-* " *wards of half a million of souls; a rapidity* " *of encrease seldom to be met with in the re-* " *cords of any country.*"

Again, " In Calcutta itself, the capital of " British India, we have already stated that " some natives of distinction have been taught " all elementary branches of European learn- " ing with considerable success; *nor has any* " *difficulty occurred in communicating this in-* " *struction*, further than what is at first una- " voidably occasioned by the want of a com- " mon language between the teachers and " their scholars. This difficulty is becoming " daily less, and in teaching the different " trades, and mechanical arts, it has almost " entirely disappeared. *Improved processes in* " *the manufacture of opium, indigo, and salt-* " *petre, have been taught the natives, with the* " *same facility and expedition that the know-* " *ledge of these arts could have been communi-* " *cated to the inhabitants of any country in* " *Europe.*

" Ship building,* practical mathematics, " and navigation, under European direction, " have, as we have already seen, made no con- " temptible progress among our Asiatic sub- " jects, when we advert to the short period " which has elapsed, since their attention has " been directed to these important branches of " knowledge."

It is also remarkable, that the assertors of this quadruple division of casts, with all its attendant evils, nevertheless dwell, with much warmth of colouring, on the pre-eminent prosperity of ancient India. We read of the honor and attention formerly shewn to agriculture; of the successful cultivation of the useful arts; of magnificent monuments of architecture; of unrivalled skill in certain branches of manufacture; and of wealth scarcely to be credited. Their mental attainments are likewise said to have been no less conspicuous. We are informed of " wonderful advances in metaphysics, morals, natural philosophy, and other branches of literature;" of poetry, said " to vie with the Iliad itself in the beauty of its descriptions, the grandeur of its sentiments, and the sublimity of its language;" of " astonish-

* In the dock-yard of Bombay *natives alone* build merchant-ships of the largest class; which are often preferred to those of any other country.

ing proficiency in the sciences of astronomy and arithmetic;" and of a "system of the universe, founded on the principle of attraction, and explaining the phenomena of the planetary world by the central position of the sun." All this, and more, has been said of the ancient Hindoos. But if the quadruple division of the casts ever existed, it must have been coeval with this brilliant æra. The descriptions thereof may, on the one hand, be exaggerated, as the immense "Colossus of superstition" is, on the other, magnified; but if these descriptions are admitted in any degree to be true, how are we to reconcile this great advancement in wealth, arts, and science, with the insuperable obstructions said to arise from the institution of casts? But reasoners of this description are not easily disturbed by the difficulties of a paradox. Accordingly, whilst we are told that "*another great obstacle* " *which must be encountered to the civilizing the* " *Hindoos, is their division into casts,*" (*Brahmen, Cshatrya, Byse,* and *Soodra*), it is added with perfect complacency, "*this institution* " has been highly extolled by many in our own " age and country; and *undoubtedly contri-* " *buted in the early period of Indian history to* " *promote the progress of refinement.*" The prosperity of ancient India requiring to be ac-

counted for, the same cause is here assigned for its advancement in one age, as for its obstruction, if not absolute retrocession, in another. We may next be taught, that the power, which has hitherto caused bodies to gravitate, will in future make them all fly upwards.

Whether the ancient Hindoo governments were, or were not, mildly administered, one fact is certain, that wherever property is, from the nature of existing institutions, not subject to the rapacious exactions of despotic rulers; where taxation is comparatively light, and in a country of great fertility, inhabited by a people naturally ingenious, industrious, and enterprising, prosperity will always be found to keep pace with the degrees in which these exciting causes have been suffered to operate. In places similarly circumstanced, the same causes still produce the same effects. In the great commercial towns of India, — the three presidencies for example,—the despotic power of the government is in some respects controuled. The king's courts of justice, besides the protection afforded by their judicial acts, are wholly independent of the government. They interpose a mediatory influence between prince and people; they have the power to reverse many of the decisions of the former,— and the conciousness of such a power being

always present, and alert, will naturally restrain many of those arbitrary proceedings which occur, without hesitation, beyond the limits of its jurisdiction.* Commerce, moreover, it has always been customary to assess more lightly to the public revenue, than agriculture; whence these favoured spots, not being subject to so uncontrouled a power, or so grinding a system of taxation, as that which crushes every vital spark of prosperity in the interior, have gone on to verify the description, given in a preceding extract, of their rapid improvement.

The moral effect of the institution of casts is to create prejudices; and all prejudices are pernicious; but what human society is without them? Those who have long resided at the different presidencies, must be sensible that the progress of prosperity has never been materially impeded by the institution of casts, as now existing in India.

We have, indeed, the authority of the very advocates of the opposite doctrine, that pros-

* Regulations or laws for the local government of the towns of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, passed by the different governors in council, are required to be sanctioned and registered by his majesty's courts of judicature at the presidencies respectively before they are valid. In fact these Courts have power to exercise all civil, criminal, admiralty and ecclesiastical jurisdiction within their respective limits, and are quite independent of the local governments.

perity has proceeded in these places with as much rapidity as among the inhabitants of any country in Europe, and we want no more; for we also know, unquestionably, that the different branches of industry may be supplied with hands, to the extent of any demand, as casts are now constituted; whence, the secret of the extreme wretchedness and poverty of the interior of India must be sought for in some more natural and real cause;—something more consistent with reason and experience, than the occult mysteries, or chimeras of Brahminical theology.

The rulers of India, like some of their brethren in the west, are naturally averse to ascribe any existing evil to error, or misconception, in the administration of the country committed to them. From themselves, we hear nothing of their own acts and conduct, but in the high and dictatorial tone of infallibility. Every measure is founded on consummate wisdom; success the never-failing consequence; and the Company's dominions are consequently held up to us, as a paradise of happiness and blessings, compared with the atrocious despotisms of our sable neighbours. All this, indeed, seems natural to the spirit of power; and as natural that its doctrines, be they ever so extravagant or fallacious, should find numerous advocates. But one and all

are nevertheless unable to deny that, in these happy regions, blessed by subjection to British sway, the most wretched poverty is abundantly discernible. To account for so suspicious an existence by any error or misrule, in the governors of the east, never enters their thoughts. Yet it would be a reflection on their understandings to be unable to explain so important a fact; and as the imagination may often be deluded, when reason fails to be convinced, the cabalistic mysteries of Hindoo superstition are brought forward; and we are assured, with all the solemnity of profound learinng, that the secret of this great evil lies in a dark system of priestcraft, which none but the initiated are allowed to understand. The ignorant and the superficial in this country, fifteen or eighteen thousand miles distant from the scene, wonder, and are satisfied; whilst deeper thinkers are too little interested in the question to analyze, or to care about it. Familiarity with the prejudice begets indifference. What every body asserts is believed to be true; and a doctrine is thus allowed to pass current, which reflection, and more accurate enquiry, would shew to be wholly groundless.

At the same time, nothing can be more convenient than this doctrine. It is equally

applicable to every objection; a ready answer to all hard questions regarding the administration of India; and a refuge against every impertinent attack. "Because an elephant is an elephant, and a *Hindoo* a *Hindoo*, we ought to leave them both on the plains of *Hindostan* where we found them," is the creed and fundamental principle of those who pretend to be the only sound interpreters of Hindoo mysteries—the best judges of the mode of governing so untoward a race, and who fire with noble indignation at all who dare to throw a shade of doubt even on the most insignificant of their administrative acts.

But the advocates of the quadruple division of casts forget that the whole population of India is not Hindoo. Of Mussulmans, native Portuguese and other Christians, Persees, Armenians, Jews, &c. there are probably not less than fifteen millions, free from the trammels of cast. Some of the Company's districts in Bengal, and other parts, have only Mussulman inhabitants; and there are many others, where Hindoos constitute the lesser number. In all these places, however, (saving a few merchants whose occupations are, as before observed, but lightly taxed) the same wretched poverty prevails; and, spreading far beyond the confines of Hindooism, cannot properly be

ascribed to a mere sectarian origin. The "immense Colossus of Hindoo superstition" cannot be pretended to affect more than its own votaries; and were we even to admit the institution of casts to be effectual in repressing the progress of Hindoo improvement, still how is it to obstruct others, who have no such fetters to bind them? If the paths of prosperity were really open, we might at least expect to see them entered by those who have neither casts, nor prejudices, nor Brahmans, to oppose their progress; but, unhappily, an universal pressure of overwhelming force bears down all alike. Men of cast, and men of no cast, are equally its victims; and exhibit one uniform picture of pauperism and degradation. Driven by the irresistible rigour of their rulers to practices of evasion, fraud, and duplicity, they are equally lost to the feelings of patriotism; indifference to life and its concerns, indolence, and crime, complete the series of effects; and a people, thus loaded with oppression, have these, its most ordinary symptoms, imputed to them as indelible vices of their own natural disposition and character. In the charge of innate depravity, so inconsiderately cast on native Indians, we have consequently a second error, to which calumny and injustice are superadded; and the last stage of this shallow

reasoning becomes a greater reproach to us, even than the first.

What, moreover, would be the state of the Hindoos, if tied down, as represented, by religious restraint at every step, with fourteen or fifteen millions of unfettered people interspersed among them, and the ways of prosperity really open? Is it not obvious that the latter would soon fill every branch of industry; and, encreasing their numbers in proportion, gradually supplant, and perhaps ultimately extinguish, the useless drones of the community? The population of India, however, was long previous to the introduction of the British government, precisely what we now find it, a combined assemblage of Hindoos, Mussulmans, &c.; whilst the stationary state of the tribes, both as to numbers and poverty, betrays the inflexibility of a common rigour, to which the workers of this prolific hive are equally exposed; and proves that their united labour only yields its sweets to become the prey of an insatiate spoiler.

But further refutation is unnecessary, since the basis of the opposite argument is proved to be a chimerical existence; a mere creation of the imagination, or at best the shadow of a departed substance: for, if we admit that this state of society ever did exist, we have record-

ed proof that it could not have long continued. Indeed, the utter unsuitableness of a quadruple division of casts, particularly under a rigorous limitation of their respective duties, to answer the general purposes and wants of any great community, must be apparent to every reasoning mind. And the early and long-continued intermixture of classes, coupled with the known fact of the lower or mixed tribes having at all times fully occupied the different branches of industry, are sufficient reasons to account for the higher tribes being now absorbed, or nearly so, among their innumerable descendants of mixed birth. Neither can we wonder at persons of comparative inutility in a society, however guarded by rank or privileges, being ultimately supplanted by others, whose uses and services are not to be dispensed with.

SECTION II.

SIMPLICITY OF THEIR FOOD AND HABITS.

Of the native Indians it is also commonly asserted by authors, and generally believed in this country, that their religion absolutely prescribes to them the use of vegetable food; flesh being altogether forbidden. The same reli-

gion is supposed to influence, and the nature of the climate to require, the greatest simplicity of attire, and household accommodation; insomuch that their dwellings are stated to be little else than a barely sufficient shelter from the rays of a burning sun, and their garments but a half covering to their natural nakedness; that those customs having existed from time immemorial, must necessarily so continue till time shall be no more; and consequently, that with a people so immersed in old prejudices, and superstitious devotion to their religious tenets, all attempts to promote internal prosperity must be vain; and every expectation of extended commerce, where present wants are few, and easily supplied, and new ones not to be created, must be, as it ever has been, a mere delusion.

It is the conclusion drawn from these doctrines that gives them their greatest importance. Laying aside, however, the various authors who have adopted them, I shall, for brevity's sake, confine myself to an authentic document, issuing from the rulers of India, whose opinions on the subject, when erroneous, it is of infinitely greater consequence to examine and correct.

In the report of the Committee of Correspondence, dated 9th February 1813, and pub-

lished by the Court of Directors for the information of the Proprietors, among various other passages of the same import, we have the following:

"*The practicability of extending, in any* "*great degree, the commerce of this country* "*with the natives of the East, in exports and* "*imports, is undoubtedly a vital question in the* "*whole of the discussion respecting the renewal* "*of the charter;* for, if no such extension be "indeed practicable, to what end should the "present system, with all the establishments "which have grown out of it, be destroyed? "The British merchants appear to entertain "the most extravagant ideas of a new world "for commercial enterprize; ideas upon "which they are ready to risk their own pro- "perty, and to sacrifice all the interests of the "existing Indian system. The Company, "backed by the great mass of British sub- "jects now in Europe, who are acquainted "with the countries of the East, maintain, in "direct opposition to all such imaginations, "*that it is not now possible greatly to extend* "*among the inhabitants of the East the con-* "*sumption of British productions, or, in this* "*country, the sale of Asiatic commodities. On* "*the side of the merchants, there is, in truth,* "*nothing but a sanguine theory. On the side*

" *of the Company, there is the experience of all*
" *the nations of Europe for three centuries;*
" *there is the testimony of ancient history; there*
" *are the climate, the nature, the usages, tastes,*
" *prejudices, religious and political institutions*
" *of the Eastern people.*"

" A profound observer of human affairs, the
" president Montesquieu, had, before the time
" of Dr. Smith, who, however, overlooks his
" opinion, *reasoned more agreeably to nature*
" *and experience* on this subject. ' Although,'
" says Montesquieu, ' commerce be liable to
" ' great revolutions, it may happen that cer-
" ' tain physical causes, such as the quality of
" ' soil and climate, shall for ever fix its cha-
" ' racter. In the commerce which we carry
" ' on with India, in modern times, *the export*
" ' *of money thither was indispensable.* The
" ' Romans carried to India every year about
" ' 50,000,000 sesterces. That money, as
" ' ours now is, was exchanged for goods,
" ' which they brought back to the west.
" ' Every nation which has traded to India,
" ' has uniformly carried the precious metals
" ' thither, and brought back goods in return.
" ' Nature itself produces this effect. The
" ' Indians have their arts, which are adapted
" ' to their manner of life. *Our wants are*
" ' *essentially different from theirs; and what*
" ' *is luxury to us can never be so to them.*

" ' *Their climate neither requires nor permits*
" ' *the use of almost any of our commodities.*
" ' *Accustomed to go almost naked, the coun-*
" ' *try furnishes them with the scanty raiments*
" ' *they wear; and their religion, to which they*
" ' *are in absolute subjection, instils into them*
" ' *an aversion to that sort of food which we*
" ' *consume. They, therefore, need nothing*
" ' *from us but our metals*, which are the signs
" ' of value, and for which they give in return
" ' the merchandize that their frugality, and
" ' the nature of the country, supply in abund-
" ' ance. Ancient authors, who have written
" ' upon India, represent the country such as
" ' we now find it, as to police, to manners,
" ' and to morals. *India has always been,*
" ' *and India always will be, what it now is;*
" ' *and those who trade to India will carry*
" ' *money thither, and bring none back.*'

" As the Court have, in their letter of the
" 13th January 1809, to the president of the
" India Board, given the same views, and in
" some detail, on this subject; not deriving
" their opinion from any single authority, but
" from the broad page of history and practice,
" it is unnecessary for your Committee again
" to enlarge upon it. But may not the atten-
" tion of manufacturers of woollens, metals,
" cotton fabrics, potteries, be still called to

" the habits of the Indian people, the bulk of " whom live all their days upon rice, and go " only half covered with a slight cotton cloth " —the rice and cotton both produced by their " own soil? The earnings of the common la- " bouring classes, and consequently their ex- " penses, may be estimated, on an average, " not to exceed £4 : 10*s.* per man per annum.* " They are indolent by nature, frugal by ha- " bit, under manifold religious restrictions. " What demand of the manufactures from " Europe is to be expected from these?"— With a great deal more in the same strain.

Whenever information is conveyed to the public by the Court of Directors, it is naturally received with all the respect due to so high an authority; and commands the ready belief of all who are indisposed to further research; but in a case where the vital interests of India, and many important interests of this country, are concerned, feelings of deference must not be allowed to silence the dictates of truth. It

* In a late statistical account of Dinagepore, a province of Bengal, there are statements of the annual expenses of different classes of society; and among them one of the expenses of a labouring man, with a wife and two children. The amount is only Rs. 22 : 10 : 11, or near £3 per annum; being at the rate of 15*s.* a head. The article of clothing, for this family of four persons, is only six shillings per annum.—Committee's Report, page 9.

will readily be admitted that the same prejudices, as exhibited in the preceding extract, are to be found in many ancient, and even modern, authors; and that the people of India are in that wretched poverty above described; but it is, at the same time, confidently affirmed, that all the reasoning founded upon these facts is contrary to *nature* and *experience*, and the conclusions thence drawn absolutely false.

The reasoning is applied to the bulk of the people; who, from religious prejudices, are stated to abhor our (*i. e.* animal) food; and consequently to live all their days upon rice. The Committee of correspondence might have stated this position more generally; since rice is only the food of the lower classes in countries where it happens to be the cheapest production of the soil. In other parts, that excessive poverty, which the Committee have depicted as the lot of native Indians, obliges them to be content with worse, and still cheaper, nutriment. It is therefore true, that grain, and other vegetables, constitute the common food of the great bulk of the people of India; but it is an error to suppose that nature, in that climate, permits not the use of animal food, or that the religion of the people requires them to abstain from it; and it is

surprising that a prejudice should have gained so much credit and currency, in the western world, when the European residents in India must have almost daily proofs before their eyes of its being absolutely belied by the ordinary practice of Mussulmans, Portuguese, and other casts, and even of the Hindoos themselves.

It has been already observed how very conveniently the casts, and prejudices, and religion of the Hindoos serve, in difficult encounters, to repel hard attacks upon the Indian system. Upon all occasions, too, where these formidable allies are called forth, and arrayed for the contest, it is likewise customary to argue, and dwell upon them, as if the whole population of India were Hindoo; the fifteen millions or more of other good souls, who have neither cast, nor aversion, (save that of the Mussulman to pork), being placed *hors de combat*, and as much overlooked, as if they belonged to the Antipodes.

But in a question of this nature, so large a mass of the Indian population must not be neglected. In the first place, then, we have from fifteen to twenty millions of persons, whose use of animal food is avowedly habitual; and as free from religious denunciation (with the exception above noticed) as our own; whose

appetite for every description of sensual gratification is almost proverbial; and whose monuments of former grandeur prove that their taste for luxuries, when their means were more ample, were not despicably indulged. To this very numerous portion of the community, the arguments deduced from assumed simplicity of food and habits, are therefore utterly inapplicable. Their expensive and luxurious inclinations never have been denied. Examples, to be sure, are fewer in these than in former times; but, in the present fallen state of their fortunes, they continue to display the same propensities, tastes, and appetites, which characterised more extensively the age of their richer fathers.

In the next place, what is the real state of the Hindoos?

The Brahmans, being of abstemious habits, are generally supposed to be prohibited the use of animal food. The law, in respect to Brahmans, will presently be stated. The mixed tribes, composing the great mass of the Hindoo population, are *certainly under no legal restraints in this respect.* Accordingly, the higher classes who can afford it consume meat daily. Many, it is true, from affectation of Brahminical purity, content themselves with simpler food; and some may

be supposed, as in other countries, to prefer it; but the custom of eating animal food is so general, as for example, in Bombay, that a public bazaar or market-place, is there set apart for the convenience of the Hindoos, in which mutton, kid, lamb, and fish, are daily sold for Hindoo consumption. It is situated in a separate quarter of the town from that in which meat is sold for the use of the Europeans, and Mussulmans; because in the latter, the flesh of oxen, and cows, and beef calves, killed by low cast people, being exposed, is offensive to Hindoo superstition. I have a personal knowledge of Hindoo families of wealth and respectability, persons, indeed, who claim descent from the second or Cshatrya cast, in which the meats and fish furnished in this bazaar, enter into their ordinary and daily meals.

The Indian seas abound with fish; and the coasts of India, for many thousand miles in extent, are lined with fishermen, who all eat animal food. It has often been remarked that no towns or villages are so populous, in proportion to their extent, as those occupied by fishermen; and the quantities of fish cured on the coast, to be afterwards conveyed for consumption into the interior of the country, is immense. The palankeen bearers are Hindoos, mostly fishermen; and no man, who

has kept a palankeen in India, but knows the thankfulness with which his bearers receive a present of a sheep or goat, and the good appetite with which they immediately feast upon it. The Hindoos are in many parts addicted to hunting; and eat wild hog, venison, and other descriptions of game.

There are, besides, other low casts, such as *Dheras*, *Halalcores*, *Chandalas*, *Mochees*, and other denominations, who, being found all over India, consequently constitute in the aggregate a numerous body, and who are so fond of meat, as in their state of degradation and poverty, actually to devour carrion with great avidity, when they can get nothing better. To these may be added another race, also spread over the face of the country, who live by entrapping wild animals and birds; and are exceedingly expert in their calling. In *Guzerat* this tribe are called *Vagrees* or *Wagrees;* and they avowedly eat the flesh of every bird and beast, without distinction—whether killed, or dying a natural death.

To these instances many more might be added; but it is perhaps of more importance in the present question, to prove that the higher classes of the Hindoos are not prohibited the use of animal food. It has accordingly been shewn that, with habitual or acquired objec-

tions to the flesh of cattle, they still consume other animal meats daily, where they have the means of so doing; and the fair inference from the preceding undoubted facts is, that poverty is the only check to a more extended use of this food, which, with the progress of wealth, might consequently become universal; or be only limited by the prejudice of the priesthood; who may always be expected to give to their habits a cast of mysterious peculiarity and self-denial, to excite more effectually the reverence and admiration of the vulgar.*

But a more satisfactory illustration of this important question may be drawn from the laws of *Menu*, son of *Brahma*, which have been so frequently set forth as having the force of divine authority over the untutored and superstitious minds of the Hindoos.

The first fifty-six verses of the fifth chapter † expressly treat of this subject; but *Bhrigu*,

* "Hindoos consider the slaughter of kine, and the eating "of cows' flesh, as sinful. But many tribes of Hindoos, and "even some Brahmins, have no objection to the use of other "animal food.

"Meat, (mutton and goats' flesh) being more than double "the price of vegetable food, cannot be afforded as a common "diet upon the usual earnings of labour." Remarks on Husbandry of Bengal, p. 112, 113.

† Vide Sir William Jones's Translation, p. 199—207.

the son of *Menu*, who delivers this law to the great *Rishis*, or Sages, sets off with declaring it to be intended for the TWICE BORN only; that is, for *Brahmans*, *Cshatryas*, and *Vaisyas*.* He first enumerates the articles of

* The TWICE-BORN classes are described by Menu to be the sacerdotal, the military, and the commercial. These three are alone allowed to study the *Vedas*; and the two latter can only do it with the aid of a Brahman preceptor. From all the other classes it is ordained that "this transcendant system of law must be kept devoutly concealed." The second birth, however, of the TWICE-BORN, is described in various places as depending on their acquiring sacred knowledge, and their advancement in virtue. "He (the twice-born) should be dili-"gent alike in at taining a knowledge of God, and in repeating the *Veda*," by the performance of which duties he is assured of endless felicity. "Let a man (it is added) consider that, as a mere "human birth which his parents gave him, for their mutual "gratification, and which he receives after lying in the womb, "but that birth which his principal *Acharya*, (preceptor,) "who knows the whole Veda, procures for him by his divine "mother the *Gayatri*, (sacred texts of Scripture,) is a true "birth; that birth is exempt from age and from death." Institutions of Menu, chap. 2. ver. 147, 148.

"Here ended the Sacred instructor, and every TWICE-BORN "man who, attentively reading this *Manava Sastra*, promul-"gated by *Brigu*, shall become habitually virtuous, will attain "the beatitude which he seeks." Institutions of Menu, chap. 12. ver. 126.

It may be curious to compare this doctrine with our Saviour's discourse with Nicodemus, in the 3d chap. of St. John: "Verily, "verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he can-"not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him,

food which are prohibited to the TWICE BORN; and these are garlic, onions, mushrooms, and all vegetables raised in dung; red gums, or resins, exuding from trees; with certain preparations of rice and bread, which have not been first offered to some deity.

Milk in certain states, and of particular animals, including that of a woman; and any thing naturally sweet, but acidulated. Buttermilk is nevertheless allowed, and every preparation thereof; and all acids extracted from pure roots, flowers, or fruit, not cut with iron.

Carnivorous birds, and such as live in towns, including the breed of the towncock. Web-footed birds; and birds that prey on each other, or devour fish. Fish generally, with the exception of five different denominations, mentioned in verse 16 *which are permitted to be eaten, together with every species thereof.*

The prohibited animals are tame hogs, quadrupeds with uncloven hoofs, except those al-

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" How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the " second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus " answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be " born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom " of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that " which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said " unto thee, ye must be born again."

For a full elucidation of the purport and object of this discourse, see Dr. Samuel Clarke's paraphrase on the Gospel of St. John, at the chapter quoted.

lowed by the *Vedas*. Solitary animals, unknown beasts or birds, and creatures with five claws; together with meat kept at a slaughter-house, and dried meat.

To these texts it is added, "The hedgehog, " or porcupine, the lizard *Gódhá*, the *Gandaca*, " the tortoise, and the rabbit or hare, wise " legislators, declare *lawful food* among five- " toed animals; and *quadrupeds*, camels ex- " cepted, *which have but one row of teeth*."

In another place "flesh-meat" is expressly termed "the food of gods;" and only prohibited where it "has not first been touched, " while holy texts are recited."

Penances are next enjoined for those who are supposed to be tainted with illicit food; and purifications prescribed; when *Bhrigu*, the son of *Menu*, proceeds to propound "the " special rules for eating, and for avoiding, " flesh-meat."

Under this head, it is enacted, that flesh meat not only is allowable, but absolutely enjoined to be eaten, when it has been "hallowed " for a sacrifice;" or, "sanctified by *Mantras*, " or sacred texts from the Vedas;" or, "pre- " sented, or offered, to manes, or the deities," of which more will be said presently. In short, this "food of gods" seems to have been considered, in old times, of a sacrificial nature,

and therefore to be eaten with certain holy rites and observances, which should render it a worthy oblation. " It is delivered as a rule " of the gods, that meat must be swallowed " only for the purpose of sacrifice;" and it is immediately added, " No sin is committed by " him, who, having honoured the deities and " the manes, eats flesh-meat. He who eats " according to law, commits no sin, even " though every day he taste the flesh of such " animals as may be lawfully tasted; since " both animals who may be eaten, and those " who eat them, are equally created by " *Brahma*."

On the other hand, to eat flesh-meat " in " vain," or without any of these holy rites, is denounced as the sin of gigantic or bloodthirsty demons; and the TWICE-BORN man who desires to " enlarge his own flesh with the flesh " of other creatures, without an oblation to the " manes or gods," brings on himself a variety of curses in this life, and in the world to come.

We are hence led to some beautiful reflections on the wantonness of injuring animals that are not themselves injurious, from any selfish motives,, whether of pleasure or advantage; and the TWICE-BORN is told, that he who gives no creatures willingly the pain of

confinement or death, but seeks the good of all sentient beings, enjoys bliss without end.

These texts are mixed up with general recommendations to abstain from flesh-meat, such abstinence being deemed highly virtuous; but it, of course, means in cases where the use of it is not, as above stated, expressly allowed, or enjoined, and as a salutary caution against excess; for even the recommendations to abstinence conclude with the following verse: "In lawfully tasting meat, in drinking fermented liquor, in caressing women, there is no turpitude; for to such enjoyments men are naturally prone; but a virtuous abstinence from them produces signal compensation."

We are also expressly told by *Brighu*, that the slaughter of animals for the holy purposes above described, is in truth no slaughter; and that the hurt done to animals which the scripture ordains, must be considered as no hurt at all; whilst the same authority adds, that "he who, engaged in holy rites, according to law, refuses to eat flesh-meat, shall sink in another world, for twenty-one births, to the state of a beast."

In the third chapter of this work we have a particular account of the sacrifices, or oblations above referred to, which the TWICE-BORN were, in ancient times, required to perform.

These are five in number; and seem to have constituted a very essential part of the daily duties of a TWICE-BORN housekeeper, or head of a family. Every housekeeper, it is observed, has five places of slaughter, or where small living creatures may be slain; his kitchen hearth, his grindstone, his broom, his pestle and mortar, his water-pot; by using which he becomes in bondage to sin; and for the expiation of offences committed ignorantly in those places, the five great sacraments, the ceremony of performing which is termed *Shraddha*, were ordained to be performed each day by such as keep house.*

Of these five sacraments, two are esteemed of pre-eminent importance; the oblations to the manes of ancestors; and to the deities; and in addition to the daily, a solemn monthly, *Shraddha* is also appointed to be celebrated,

* The five Sacraments are, 1st. *Ahuta*, or unoffended; Divine study, or the Sacrament of the *Vida*.

2nd. *Praisita*, or well eaten; the offering of rice, cakes, water, &c. to the manes of ancestors.

3rd. The *Huta*, or offered; the oblation to fire, or Sacrament of the Deities.

4th. The *Prahuta*, or well offered; the food given to living creatures, or the Sacrament of Spirits.

5th. *Brahmya Huta*; respect and hospitality shewn to *twice born* guests, or the Sacrament of Men.

on the dark day of the moon, in honor of the manes, and of the gods. The ceremonies to be performed, and the offerings to be made, at both the daily and monthly *Shraddha* are minutely described; particularly at the latter, which is of great consequence.

Of the monthly *Shraddha*, it is enacted, that "it must be performed with great care, and "*with flesh-meat in the best condition*," and the meat is expressly enjoined to be eaten by *Brahmans*, and others, after being sanctified as an oblation.

The enumerated offerings of the daily *Shraddha* are rice, cakes, milk, vegetables, and water; but it must be presumed that meat also was understood to be enjoined or allowed, in one or more of the five sacraments, since otherwise it may be difficult to reconcile different parts of the law. Whatever was the practice of yore in this respect, must now be collected from a correct interpretation of the law; for modern customs differ from the old ones, as will presently be shewn; and perhaps because there are no longer *twice-born* housekeepers (Brahmans excepted) to perform them.

Now the daily *Shraddha* includes an offering to the manes, and another to the gods; at

both which sacrifices the eating of flesh-meat is, in some texts, declared to be lawful, and in others absolutely commanded.

In the next place, meat could not be eaten by the TWICE-BORN, that had not first been offered as a sacrifice. It is this sanctification which renders it lawful food; and when the TWICE-BORN is told he commits no sin, even though *every day* he taste the flesh of such animals as may be lawfully eaten, it is clear that these sacraments are referred to, as necessary to give it the purification required. Again, flesh meat is pre-eminently termed the food of the gods; and when offered to them in sacrifice, is declared to be peculiarly acceptable. In the chapter more immediately under consideration, we are informed that it is no less acceptable to manes. The texts are as follow:

266. "What sort of oblations given duly to "the manes, are capable of satisfying them "for a long time, or for eternity, I will now "declare without omission."

267. "The ancestors of men are satisfied a "whole month with *Tila*, rice, barley, black "lentils or vetches, water, roots, and fruit, "given with prescribed ceremonies."

268. "Two months with fish, three months

" with venison, four with mutton; five with
" the flesh of such birds as the TWICE-BORN
" may eat."

269. " Six months with the flesh of kids,
" seven with that of spotted deer, eight with
" that of the deer or antelope called *Ena*, nine
" with that of the *Ruru*."

270. " Ten months are they satisfied with
" the flesh of wild boars, and wild buffaloes;
" eleven with that of rabbits, or hares, and
" of tortoises."

271. " A whole year with the milk of cows,
" and food made of that milk; from flesh of
" the long-eared white goat, their satisfaction
" endures twelve years.

272, " The potherb *Calasacá*; the fish *Ma-*
" *hasálca*, or the *Diodon*, the flesh of a rhino-
" ceros, or of an iron-coloured kid, honey, and
" all such forest grains as are eaten by the
" hermits, are formed for their satisfaction
" without end."

If, therefore, we combine the various enactments of this supposed divine law, taking each to be equally valid, and we are particularly enjoined so to do for a right understanding and observance thereof,* the conclusion I

* Near the commencement of the code, we have the following rule laid down for interpreting such parts as may ap-

apprehend is inevitable; that *Menu* and his son *Bhrigu*, so far from prohibiting, have actually enjoined, the daily use of animal food to *Brahmans*, *Cshatryas*, and *Vaisyas*; inasmuch as they are or were commanded to make daily sacrifices to manes and to the gods, in which flesh-meats of various kinds constitute part of the offering; and as such, are required to be eaten by the officiating Brahmans, by the master of the house and his family, and by those of the *twice-born* who attended the ceremony as guests.

This then is the law which *Menu*, through his son *Bhrigu*, delivered to the sages of old. Now our adversaries in the present argument constantly tell us, that the untutored and superstitious Hindoos are accustomed to venerate the law of *Menu*, as of divine authority; that it regulates and unalterably fixes their minutest domestic habits; and has therefore

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pear to exhibit inconsistencies or opposite enactments: "When "there are two sacred texts, apparently inconsistent, both are "held to be law; for both are pronounced by the wise to be "valid and reconcileable. Thus in the *Veda* are these texts; "Let the sacrifice be when the sun has arisen; and before it "has risen; and when neither the sun nor stars can be seen; "the sacrifice may therefore be performed at any, or all, of "those times." Chap. 2. ver. 14, 15.

an influence over their minds which must render every attempt at innovation, or change, the greatest of human absurdities.

These are the doctrines by which it is endeavoured to scare us, when projects of amelioration are suggested by persons supposed to be unfavourable to the selfish views, and interest, and patronage of the monopoly; and who incur no small degree of odium for daring to prefer, to these paltry considerations, the grander object of universal welfare.

But is it not wonderful, that these dogmatic expounders of the Hindoo law should proclaim to us, as articles of faith, the very reverse of what the law itself ordains? that they have as grossly mistaken the restraints on food as on casts? and would have us believe that it prohibits, what we now see it actually commands, to be eaten? Were we then to admit their premises as to the inviolability of the law, what are we still to think of their conclusions? The reader can have no difficulty in deciding; and he may likewise be assured that a further examination of the code and its precepts, would shew that there is as little authority for supposing the alleged simplicity of other Hindoo habits to be of Divine or legal appointment.

This law, however, it must not be forgotten,

refers only to the TWICE BORN. *Bhrigu*, "whose disposition is perfect virtue," like some modern legislators probably fancied (or who knows but that the moderns may have caught the spirit from the ancient sage) that laws were only necessary to guard the rich and powerful; and that it was quite sufficient for the vulgar mob, who came naked and helpless into life, to be suffered to go naked and helpless through it. Accordingly *Bhrigu* troubles himself but little about the mixed classes, i. e. the great mass of the people; or, when his "perfect virtue" condescends to notice them, it is generally as worthless wretches, or by some such opprobrious epithet. In respect to their food, there is neither prohibition, privilege, nor enactment. They may be referred to that general description of degraded mortals, to whom lawful and forbidden meats are equal. They are therefore left to their own tastes and appetites; and if they have any prejudices in these times, in regard to particular descriptions of food, such prejudices are unquestionably of human, and have no pretension whatever to the authority of divine, sanction. If then the law of *Menu* be inviolable, it is not so, as alleged, to the effectual obstruction of prosperity. The law itself, whether we consider the permitted in-

termixture of casts, their lawful occupations, or lawful food, rather opens, than closes, the channels of progressive advancement; and in this respect has been greatly misrepresented, or misunderstood.

The numerous quotations already made from these laws, and the highest Indian authorities, are, it is presumed, sufficient to take from credulity itself every standing place, on which to rest the alleged simplicity and immutability of *Hindoo* habits — to say nothing of the fifteen millions of Mussulmans, and other natives, who never were pretended to be bound, in these respects, by legal or religious restraints. It is true enough, as asserted by the rulers of India, that the great mass of the population, Hindoo, Mussulman, and others, are obliged to live all their days on rice, or the coarsest, and the cheapest grains, and to go only half covered with a slight cotton cloth — that the expenses of a labouring man, with a wife and two children, is only about £3 per annum, the article of clothing being only 6*s*. for this family of four persons.* All this I have already admitted. Those who have visited Ire-

* Col. Munro states the average price of agricultural labour in the "Ceded Districts," to be about 5*s*. per month, or 2*d*. per day. He framed tables, dividing the population (about 2,000,000 persons) into three classes, and ascertained the

land, may conceive the possibility of human beings, when necessity compels, contriving to drag on a miserable existence in this state of abject poverty and want; but to believe that 100 millions of human beings should be so much in love with this simple system of wretchedness, as to be one and all "resolute "to maintain it against innovation," being "what from age to age they have been accus- "tomed to venerate," requires a degree of faith in mysteries, and marvels, which the

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average annual expense of each individual for clothing, food, and every other article, to be as follows:

	£	s.	d.
First class, containing about one fourth of the population, average per head	2	0	0
Second class, containing about one half of the population, average per head	1	7	0
Third class, containing about one fourth of the population, average per head	0	18	0

Minutes of Evidence, 12 Ap. 1813. p. 124.

This statement was given by Colonel Munro to the Committee, apparently for the purpose of supporting the then fashionable and favourite doctrine that it was impossible to extend the consumption of European commodities among so poor and simple a people as the native Indians. The doctrine is now sufficiently refuted by facts; but what a lamentable picture does it afford us of the wretched poverty of this unhappy people, to be told, on the authority of Colonel Munro, that the expenditure of a person of what he terms the first class is only equal to £2 sterling per annum—not so much as the gains of a common labourer in this country for one month.

strength of natural reason is unable to reach; and which the inspired high priests of the great Temple in Leadenhall Street must therefore be left to expound.

In the mean time, I would ask any Indian gentleman, who has been in the habit of visiting the palaces of the native princes of India, or the habitations of the wealthier natives, Hindoo, Mussulman, or others; of meeting their splendid retinues and equipages abroad; attending their processions—their religious feasts—their marriages and other domestic ceremonies—whether the grandeur and magnificence of their displays, the luxuries, the indulgencies, the enjoyments, the profuse expenditure of every kind which he has, in these places, or on these occasions, witnessed, have left on his mind any impression of that unalterable simplicity and poverty, of that *semi-demi* state of clothing and starvation, which the honourable Court would have us believe to be almost an object of idolatrous worship to the natives of India.—Or, if there be still any believers in this monstrous and unnatural creed, let me beg of them to peruse with attention the following statement, taken from the accounts annually laid before Parliament, and ordered by the House of Commons to be printed.—May 15, 1827.

Official value of Exports from the United Kingdom to the East Indies and China, together with the Mauritius.

Years.	East India Company's Trade.	Private Trade.	Total Exports.
1814	£1,117,515	£ 578,889	£1,696,404
1815	1,118,302	946,264	2,064,566
1816	952,674	1,232,968	2,185,642
1817	881,440	1,898,186	2,779,626
1818	820,566	2,365,185	3,185,751
1819	887,498	1,486,058	2,373,556
1820	1,129,917	2,142,894	3,272,811
1821	1,536,657	2,766,388	4,303,045
1822	989,070	2,886,864	3,875,934
1823	982,839	3,372,592	4,355,431
1824	1,050,700	3,344,100	4,394,800
1825	1,000,907	2,944,169	3,945,076
1826	1,292,833	3,584,300	4,877,133
*	13) 13.760.918	13) 29.548.557	43.309.775
Av. per an.	£1.058.532	2.272.989	
Exports	13.760.218	29.548.857	
Imports	48.192.121	44.736.637	
Total	£61.953.039	74.285.494	

Excess of private trade to India over the whole of the Company's trade to India and China in 13 years . . £12.332.455

* This account is certified by the official signature of the "Inspector General of Imports;" the bolder figures after the asterisk only being added by the author.

Total official Value of the Imports into the United Kingdom, from the East Indies and China, together with the Mauritius.

Years.	East India Company's Trade.	Private Trade.	Total.
1814	£3,986,523	£2,311,863	£6,298,386
1815	3,948,794	4,089,942	8,038,736
1816	4,591,172	3,719,525	8,310,697
1817	4,094,225	3,593,053	7,687,278
1818	2,944,626	4,393,063	7,337,698
1819	3,244,431	4,293,132	7,537,563
1820	3,907,789	3,654,858	7,562,647
1821	3,892,805	2,340,766	6,233,571
1822	3,160,742	1,945,658	5,106,400
1823	3,636,196	3,282,344	6,918,540
1824	3,618,425	3,693,930	7,312,355
1825	3,469,433	3,112,625	6,582,058
1826	3,696,960	4,305,878	8,002,838
*	13) 48,192,121	44,736,637	92,928,758
Av. per. an.	£3,707,086	3,441,280	

Annexed to these statements is a specification of eleven articles of Import, and eleven of Export, in both the Company's and Private Trade.† If these are intended to serve in any

† *The Exports are*

1 Cloths of all sorts
2 Camblets, serges, &c.
3 Other woollen goods
4 Cottons, white or plain

The Imports are

1 Tea
2 Sugar, unrefined
3 Rum
4 Indigo

degree as a comparison of the extent of trade carried on by both parties, it cannot be admitted as a fair criterion; for tea is included among the imports with which no private traders, or none but the captains and officers of the Company's ships, dare meddle. It must not be supposed, either, that the eleven articles of import comprise the whole of the trade from India; for though the Company's imports from that quarter be limited, the imports in private trade consist of from sixty to eighty other articles to be found in every monthly price current;* and constituting in

5 Cottons, printed or dyed	5 Coffee
6 Other manufactured cottons	6 Cotton-wool
7 Cotton-twist and yarn	7 Raw and waste silk
8 Iron and steel	8 Piece goods of cotton & herba
9 Copper	9 Silk manufactures, viz. Bandanoes and other handkerchiefs
10 Tin, unwrought	
11 Lead and shot	
	10 Taffatees & other silk goods
	11 Crapes

* The following are extracted at random from a printed Price Current as, being common and constant articles of Import, by private traders, over and above those contained in the preceding official statement.

Pepper, black	Rice, Moongy
——— Sumatra	Aloes, Cape
——— white	—— Hepatic
Saltpetre	Anise-seeds, star
Rice, Bengal, Patna	Bee's wax
—— Patchery	Borax, India

the aggregate a large mass, of which few indeed enter into the Company's trade.

Camphor
Cardemoms, Malabar
——— Ceylon
Cassia, Lignea
——— Buds
Catechu or Terra Japonica
China Root
Cinnabar or Vermilion
Cinnamon
Cloves, Amboyna
——— Bourbon
Cochineal
Coculus Indicus
Colomba Root
Cubebs
Dragon's Blood
Elephant's Teeth
Galanga Root
Galls
Ginger
Gum Ammoniac
——— Animi
——— Arabic
——— Assafœtida
——— Benjamin
——— Gamboge
——— Kino
——— Myrrh
——— Olibanum
Lac Dye
Lac Lake
Mace
Mother of Pearl shells
Munjeet
Musk, China
Nutmegs
Oil Cajaputa
— Cassia
— Castor
— Cinnamon
— Cloves
— Cocoa nut
— Mace
Rhubarb
Safflower
Sago, Malacca
Sal Ammoniac
Senna
Seed Lac
Shellac
Strick-Lac, Siam
Soy
Tamarinds, Java
Tin, Banca
Tortoise-shell
Turmeric, China
——— Java
——— Bengal
Wood, Ebony
——— Sapan
——— Saunders

These statements, however, commence with the year when the Indian trade was first opened to private British merchants; at which time the monopolists of Leadenhall Street published a manifesto to warn the merchants and manufacturers of Britain, of the danger they would incur from commercial dealings with men in such a "mis-shapen structure of society" as that of India;—with men in the lowest depths of poverty from choice, as well as from religious restriction; absolutely immutable in all their habits; and who were supplied, under the monopoly, to the fullest extent of their wants, adding, "What further "demand for the manufactures of Europe is "to be expected from such a people?" The statements above given are the best answer to these assertions, and to the concluding query—they shew that the immutability of the native Indians has, at all events since 1813, become mutable;—that their love of poverty and simplicity has been unaccountably changed for a love of comforts and variety; and that the demand for European manufactures, both as to quantity and kind, has prodigiously encreased since the prophetic denunciations of impossibility were proclaimed from Leadenhall Street; and consequently encreasing, in the same ratio, the demand in

return for the produce of India. Let it also be remembered that the exports of the private trade are greatly more numerous than the preceding statements might lead us to suppose. They consist of all the staple manufactures of Britain—woollens and cottons of every variety and value; manufactured silks; hardware of all descriptions—iron, copper, lead, tin, and spelta, in large quantities; marine and military stores; machinery for various uses; glass ware of the richest specimens, down to articles of the commonest use; china ware, or porcelain, the same; jewellery of all sorts; gold and silver plate, and ornaments; clocks; watches; furniture; carriages; harness; haberdashery; hosiery; stationery; books; in short, every article of luxury, comfort, or convenience, which British industry can produce.

Taking, however, the official statements as presented to parliament, the following results are undeniable, viz.:—that the average per annum of

The East India Company's export trade to *India* and *China* is.....	£1,058,532	Whilst that of the private trade to *India alone* is	£2,272,989
The East India Company's import trade from *India* and *China* is	3,707,086	And that of the private trade from *India alone* is.....	3,441,280
Total	£4,765,618	Total	£5,714,269

We hence see that the official value of the

exports by private traders to *India alone* is more than *double* the Company's exports to *India* and *China together;* and that the whole of the private trade to India alone exceeds the whole of the Company's trade to India and China together, by nearly one million sterling per annum. It is to be lamented that no distinction is made, in these official accounts, between the Company's exports to India and those to China; for, if this were done, it can scarcely be doubted, but the exports by private traders would be treble, or quadruple, those of the Company's exports to India separately. One fact, however, is certain, that the average of the Company's trade being now much the same as formerly, private traders, since the opening, have carried on a trade with India, averaging for the last 13 years, *nearly six millions sterling per annum over and above all that is done, or ever has been done, by the East India Company.* — So much for the doctrine of those, who have so pertinaciously contended, that the supply of European commodities, under the monopoly, was fully equal to the demand in India, and that the trade was incapable of increase. But plain facts require no gloss; and those now adduced being supported by official proofs, refute, of themselves, without either comment or explanation,

the gross errors and absurdities with which the British public have been so long deluded, in respect to the simplicity and immutability of native Indians.

In the discussions of 1813, I stood almost alone, in strenuously asserting that the commercial intercourse with India would be, what it is now proved to be, by the opening then conceded. I certainly pretend to no prophetic inspiration; but from my knowledge and experience of the inhabitants of the East, I do not hesitate again, as confidently, to affirm, that the present encrease is not a tythe of what our trade with India will be, if, at the expiration of the present charter, it be ridden of other restraints, and fairly laid open to the skill, and enterprize, and capital of the private merchants of Britain, and to the natural and unfettered energies of our Indian subjects.

Before I conclude, it may be useful to caution the reader and the public, against being deceived by the weight of great names, who may be induced, from whatever motives, to offer opinions on this subject, opposed to plain, recorded, and undeniable facts. On the renewal of the existing charter in 1813, opinions, proceeding from high authority, influenced prejudicially the discussions then pending; and which subsequent events have proved

to be most erroneous. Examinations will probably again take place, previous to the new arrangement to be adopted for India in 1833; and to guard against the recurrence of similar delusions, I shall briefly recur to what passed at the last renewal.

Among the witnesses examined on that occasion, before the Lords and Commons, one stood pre-eminently high in general estimation;* Colonel, afterwards Sir Thomas, Munro. Far be it from me to detract from the real merits of this distinguished officer;—his talents were certainly of no ordinary stamp;—his services, in many respects, most meritorious;—and the high honours, to which he attained as the reward of his services, prove the estimation in which he was held by the superior authorities in England. But a character like this, is precisely the person whose errors are most likely to be accepted with the public; and therefore the more necessary, where they have existed, to be fairly exposed.

In the earnest representations of the Court of Directors, at this time, and their anxious endeavours to protect their beloved monopoly against innovation, we have seen, that they strongly insisted on three points, viz:—

* His evidence was said to have electrified the House of Commons.

The danger of free intercourse between Europeans and native Indians; from the certainty of the latter being exposed to outrage of their civil and religious habits, likely to endanger the peace of the country, and the stability of government.

That no increase of demand for European commodities could be expected to arise among a people of such simple and immutable habits. — And,

That the commercial intercourse, between England and India, was carried under the East India Company's monopoly, to the fullest extent of which it was susceptible.

On the first of these heads, Colonel Munro contends, (and his evidence is confirmed by several other Company's servants,) that permitting English traders to range, and reside, in the interior would be attended with very dangerous consequences; and great inconvenience to the peace of the country; — that great mischief would arise from persons newly arrived from Europe, — and before they were duly tutored and initiated into the mysteries of native manners — being allowed to penetrate into the interior; — and he gives the following illustration. "A single ensign, newly "arrived from Europe, going up the country "to join his regiment, produces more alarm

" than would be occasioned by a whole regi-
" ment of veterans." *

Colonel Munro adds, further on, that unless a "free trade," as he calls it, were confined to the three presidencies, or one or two other ports having European garrisons and magistrates, and subject also to the system of licences †, and all the other restraints now in force, including the power of arbitrary depor-

* Minutes of Evidence, April 12, 1813, p. 122.

† Colonel Munro's opinion of the high importance of licences, is more fully stated in the following extract from his evidence: —

" Do not you believe that if licences were *not granted by*
" *the Company;* but the regulations of the Company still
" remained in force to be applied to persons sent out under the
" authority of the law of this country, the government in
" India must necessarily be much lowered in its authority, and
" *that those regulations could not be practically enforced?*"—
" *I think that such a measure would have the effect of vir-*
" *tually subverting the authority of the Company in India.*"

" When you speak of a licence, do you mean a licence from
" the East India Company, or the Government in India, *as*
" *the only security* there would be against the inconvenience
" that would otherwise arise from a free trade?"—" I am of
" opinion there can be *no other security but such licences*
" coming either through the East India Company or the
" government in India."—Minutes of Evidence, April 12, 1813, p. 132.

In other words, the monopolists were the only fit persons to be intrusted with the power of granting licences; and these licences being viewed as odious encroachments on the monopoly itself, we may easily conceive the spirit in which the power would be exercised.

tation, (glorious free trade!) the "security of "our possessions in India would be endan- "gered, and the government unable to main- "tain its authority." *

This is precisely the doctrine of his great masters, the monopolists; to which may be opposed the experience, I believe, of the whole world; — and the following short observation, viz.: that although, under despotic governments, it is usual enough for proud masters to insult and maltreat their submissive slaves; — still, the intercourse which would subsist between European merchants and native Indians, must necessarily be of a different stamp. The buyers and sellers of commodities, when brought into contact, have no motive for quarrel or abuse; — but, on the contrary, the strongest possible inducements to conciliatory demeanor towards each other.

It is the East India Company and their own servants, armed as they are with power, and instigated by jealousy, who have, from the earliest times to the present hour, been involved in quarrel, disturbance, and war, with the natives of India; and who, to guard their own privileges, ascribe to others the outrages and disorders of which they themselves have been most guilty.

* Minutes of Evidence, April 12, 1813, pp. 131, 132—137.

If unarmed peaceful traders, not having the same incitements to violence, were equally prone to the same contentions, how has it happened that merchants, who have found their way into the interior, — that numerous French, Dutch, Portuguese, Danes, and Americans, have been able, for a long succession of years, to carry on commercial dealings, not only with native Indians, but with other Asiatics of far more sensitive and capricious temperaments ?*

In the true spirit, however, of monopoly, British merchants in India have ever been considered interlopers and enemies — sometimes exposed to virulent persecution and barbarous cruelty,† and uniformly branded

* During my service in India, I knew several European merchants, who resided in districts not subject to the Company's jurisdiction, in perfect harmony with the natives. The Americans carry on a trade with the Chinese, equal to that of the Company's monopoly trade. We never hear of quarrels between the Americans and the natives ; whilst the Company's supercargoes, in spite of the charm of their monopoly, have not only been frequently, but seriously embroiled.

† Mr. Mill, in giving an account of the shocking cruelties perpetrated by the Company against "*interlopers*," in 1691, subjoins the following note, which characterises in true colours the spirit of monopoly ; and which, however tempered it may be by later laws, can never be extinguished but with the abolition of the monopoly itself.

"Sir Josiah Child, as chairman of the Court of Directors,

with the imputation of being incorrigible disturbers of the public peace. When, in 1813, the Indian monopoly began to savour badly with the public, and to require the aid of collateral props, alarms were again industriously spread. A Hindoo was magnified into a nondescript, whom none but dexterous monopolists were qualified to manage. Beware, say the privileged order, of granting access to strangers! Free traders are a pestilence! Even youths, proceeding to join their corps, are little better than moving volcanoes! And to crown the whole, it is deliberately asserted, in which Colonel Thomas Munro, and other covenanted servants, as deliberately concur, that the Company's commercial dealings in

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" wrote to the governor of Bombay, to spare no severities to " crush their countrymen who invaded the ground of the " Company's pretensions in India. The governor replied, by " professing his readiness to omit nothing which lay within the " sphere of his power to satisfy the wishes of the Company; " but the laws of England unhappily would not let him pro- " ceed so far as might otherwise be desirable. Sir Josiah " wrote back with anger, that he expected his orders were to " be his rules, and not the laws of England, which were an " heap of nonsense, compiled by a few ignorant country gen- " tlemen, who hardly knew how to make laws for the good of " their own private families, much less for the regulating of " companies and foreign commerce. Hamilton's New Account " of India, p. 232."

India have not only raised the national character in the eyes of the natives;* but that the continuance of the monopoly is necessary to enable the Government to carry on the political administration of the country!!

On the other two heads, Colonel Munro deposes as follows:

That in the event of a free trade to India, there would be no considerable encrease of European commodities among the natives; that the natives have no taste for our manufactures, but greatly prefer their own; that "there are very few persons in India that "purchase any European commodities; it "does not depend upon a man's wealth or "poverty; the wealthy man purchases no

* For an account of the arbitrary proceedings of the Company in respect to their India trade, see the author's Speeches, Part 2. and the Appendices annexed to it, and Lord Wellesley's Letter, of 1804, published in England in 1812. To say nothing of the oppressions recorded in those papers, and which will be noticed hereafter, the reader may judge of the effect of the Company's commercial dealings in raising the national character, by Lord Wellesley's express admission, that the "*main and avowed object of the Company's system is an* "*exclusive appropriation of the labour of the weavers, and* "*the establishment of a controul over that labour, to enable* "*the commercial officers to obtain the proportion of the goods* "*required for the Company at prices to be regulated by* "*the officers themselves.*"

" more than his poor neighbour; there is no " gradation in the consumption of European " commodities depending on the wealth of " individuals; at our principal settlements, " where we have been longest established, the " natives have adopted none of our habits, " and scarcely use any of our commodities. " There are a few natives at Madras and " some other places, who sometimes purchase " European commodities, and fit up apart- " ments in an European style, to receive their " guests; but it is done merely, I believe, " in compliment to their European friends; " and what is purchased in this way, by the " father, is very often thrown away by the " son; the consumption does not extend, but " seems to remain stationary."

In another part he observes, that European articles in demand by natives " are very " trifling; a few penknives, or scissors, or " small looking-glasses, or spectacles, com- " pose almost the whole cargo of European " goods that are to be found in the interior of " India."

Colonel Munro ascribes all this chiefly to the unalterable simplicity of Hindoo habits, as if all the inhabitants of India were Hindoo. He also supposed *most erroneously*, that native Indians could supply themselves with the

little they did want, at a cheaper rate from their own manufactures, than by importing British or European fabrics, because labour was so much cheaper in India; adding, "the "food of the Indian is simple, and is en- "tirely found in his own country: we can- "not supply him, because, while he can get "it (commodities) not only better, but cheaper, "at home, it is impossible that we can enter "into competition in the market."

In conformity with the preceding doctrines, Colonel Munro adds, that the then supply of European commodities "was certainly equal "to the demand of every part of India that I "have seen;" and in reply to a question, as to whether the supply was equal to any probable encrease of demand that could be then contemplated, he observes, "The present sys- "tem of supply is equal, and much more than "equal, to any probable encrease which is "likely to take place."

Although Colonel Monro, in his cross examination before the Committee of the House of Commons, was compelled to admit facts at variance with the preceding quotations; yet these are the doctrines which he deliberately held; which confirmed him in the favour of the honourable Court; and to which several other servants of the Company, examined on

that occasion, also subscribed. I have given the evidence in his own words, lest I might be accused of misrepresentations; for there are many persons now in England, of perhaps equal experience with Colonel Munro, in the habits and dispositions of native Indians, who will read, with astonishment, the fallacy and absurdity of these opinions. For my own part, I refer to the statements given in the preceding pages, for their complete refutation. —They are recapitulated here for the sole purpose of guarding against future delusion; and to express a hope that, if any more Committees be appointed to sit on India affairs, they will not allow themselves, in the face of plain recorded facts, to be led astray by the mis-statements of 1813.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE greater part of the foregoing tract was written many years ago; but circumstances occurring to delay the publication, it ceased to occupy attention, until lately, that I have been induced to renew my first intention. After finishing the first and second parts,—and when this first part was in the hands of the printer, I have had an opportunity of inspecting the recently published Journal of Bishop Heber; and was much gratified to find that it abounds with passages strongly confirmative of the opinions I have advanced in both the first and second parts, relative to the natives of India—their food, habits, casts, natural disposition, and capacity of improvement. The reader will recollect the extraordinary pains that were taken in 1813 to convince Parliament and the British public, that we were then about to legislate for men in a "mis-shapen structure of society,"—for a

people so bound down by religious prejudices and laws, as to be unlike all the other great families of mankind—to be immutable in their habits—utterly incapable of improvement, or of extended wants, and consequently only fit to be governed by, what?—by a commercial monopoly! It is to dissipate this monstrous delusion—to shew who, and what, it is we are called upon to govern—to prove, if I can, that our Indian subjects are as capable of knowledge, of virtue, of enjoying the blessings of life as ourselves, that I have ventured to present myself to the notice of the public, and convinced, as I am, that accurate knowledge on these points is indispensable to a sound legislation for India, I trust it will not be deemed superfluous, if I here subjoin the Bishop's authority, as supporting the view I have taken of this fundamental part of the subject. Every reader of the Bishop's work must, I think, be impressed with the sound sense, impartial judgment, and truly Christian feelings, of its author; and, as far as his attention was drawn to facts illustrative of the habits and condition of the natives, of which many interesting details are given throughout the Journal, his testimony, as an eye-witness of all that he describes, is invaluable; and his character too high, and too well established,

to doubt for a moment the authenticity of his narrations.

To save the reader the trouble of referring to two large volumes, I here subjoin a few extracts, to enable him to contrast the Bishop's facts with those I have adduced, and with the adverse opinions, given by others in 1813.

And first, as to the food of Hindoos, and the allegation that they are compelled "to live all their days upon rice." *

"The caste of fishermen does not rank "high, though fish is considered as one of "the purest and most lawful kinds of food. "Nothing, indeed, seems more generally mis-"taken than the supposed prohibition of ani-"mal food to the Hindoos. It is not from "any abstract desire to spare the life of "living creatures, since fish would be a vio-"lation of this principle as well as beef, but "from other notions of the hallowed or pol-"luted nature of particular viands. Thus "many Brahmins eat both fish and kid. The "Rajepoots, besides these, eat mutton, veni-"son, or goat's flesh. Some castes may eat "any thing but fowls, beef, or pork; while "pork is with others a favourite diet, and beef "only is prohibited." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. i. p. 7.)

* Vide page 48.

" June 20th. About 10 o'clock some fisher-
" men brought a very noble fish alongside for
" sale, of exactly the shape and appearance
" of a chub, but weighing at least twenty or
" five and twenty pounds — after a good deal
" of haggling, they sold it for twelve anas
" (about eighteen pence). The *khánsaman*
" (butler) proposed salting the greater part,
" but I made the servants very well pleased,
" by saying that I would only have a little
" boiled for ourselves, and that the rest should
" be divided among them for their Sunday
" dinner; an arrangement which seemed to
" offend no religious prejudices, either Hin-
" doo or Mussulman, inasmuch as the differ-
" ent messes seemed all eager to receive their
" portions, and in the evening at our bivouac
" their kettles were all supplied with it."
(Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. i. p. 102—3.)

See an anecdote of the same kind at p. 329, ending thus: " Every person on board had fish
" to-day, and the cost did not exceed half-a-
" crown, no great sum to make forty people
" happy for the afternoon."

" We have all heard, for instance, of the
" humanity of the Hindoos towards brute
" creatures, their horror of animal food, &c.;
" and you may be perhaps, as much surprised
" as I was, to find that those who can afford
" it are hardly less carnivorous than ourselves;

" that even the purest Brahmins eat mutton " and venison; that fish is permitted to many " castes, and pork to many others." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 306.)

" I had always heard and fully believed till " I came to India, that it was a grievous crime, " in the opinion of the Brahmins, to eat the " flesh or shed the blood of any living creature " whatever. I have now myself seen Brah- " mins of the highest caste cut off the head " of goats as a sacrifice to *doorga;* and I " know from the testimony of Brahmins, as " well as from other sources, that not only " hecatombs of animals are often offered in " this manner, as a most meritorious act (a " raja about twenty-five years back, offered " sixty thousand in one fortnight); but that " any person, Brahmins not excepted, eats " readily of the flesh of whatever has been " offered up to one of their divinities, while " among almost all the other castes, mutton, " pork, venison, fish, anything but beef and " fowls, are consumed as readily as in Eu- " rope." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 379.)

Let the reader next compare the following paragraphs, with the alleged immutability of Hindoo habits; with their being doomed to go for ever " half covered with a slight cotton

cloth;"* and with their demand for European articles being confined to a "few penknives, scissars, and spectacles."†

"Their (the wealthy natives) houses are "adorned with verandahs, and Corinthian "pillars; they have very handsome carriages, "often built in England, they speak tolerable "English, and they shew a considerable "liking for European society, where (which "unfortunately is not always the case) they "are encouraged or permitted to frequent "it on terms of any thing like equality." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 291.)

"Nor have their (the Hindoos) religious "prejudices, and the unchangeableness of "their habits, been less exaggerated. Some "of the best informed of their nation, with "whom I have conversed, assure me, that "half their most remarkable customs of civil "and domestic life are borrowed from their "Mahommedan conquerors; and at present "there is an obvious and increasing disposi-"tion to imitate the English in every thing, "which has already led to very remarkable "changes, and will, probably, to still more "important. The wealthy natives now all "affect to have their houses decorated with "Corinthian pillars, and filled with English

* Vide p. 48. † Vide p. 85.

" furniture; they drive the best horses and " the most dashing carriages in Calcutta; " many of them speak English fluently; and " are tolerably read in English literature, and " the children of one of our friends I saw one " day dressed in jackets and trowsers, with " round hats, shoes and stockings. In the " Bengalee newspapers, of which there are " two or three, politics are canvassed with a " bias, as I am told, inclining to Whiggism; " and one of their leading men gave a great " dinner not long since in honour of the Spa- " nish revolution — among the lower orders " the same feeling shews itself more be- " neficially in a growing neglect of caste." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 306.)

" But to say that the Hindoos or Mussul- " mans are deficient in any essential feature " of a civilized people, is an assertion which " I can scarcely suppose to be made by any " who have lived with them; their manners " are, at least, as pleasing and courteous as " those in the corresponding stations of life " among ourselves, their houses are larger, " and according to their wants and climate, " to the full as convenient as ours; — their " architecture is at least as elegant, and " though the worthy Scotch divines may " doubtless wish their labourers to be clad in

" 'hodden gray,' and their gentry and mer-
" chants to wear powder and mottled stock-
" ings, like worthy Mr ——— and the other
" elders of his kirk-session, I really do not
" think that they would gain either in clean-
" liness, elegance, or comfort, by exchanging
" a white cotton robe for the completest suits
" of dittos—nor is it true that in the mecha-
" nic arts, they are inferior to the general
" run of European nations. Where they fall
" short of us (which is chiefly in agricultural
" implements, and the mechanics of common
" life) they are not, so far as I have under-
" stood of Italy, and the South of France,
" surpassed in any great degree by the people
" of those countries. Their goldsmiths and
" weavers produce as beautiful fabrics as our
" own, and it is so far from true that they are
" obstinately wedded to their old patterns,
" that they shew an anxiety to imitate our
" models, and do imitate them very success-
" fully. The ships built by native artists at
" Bombay are notoriously as good as any
" which sail from London or Liverpool. The
" carriages and gigs which they supply at
" Calcutta are as handsome, though not as
" durable, as those of Long Acre. In the
" little town of Monghyr, 300 miles from Cal-
" cutta, I had pistols, double-barrelled guns,

" and different pieces of cabinet work, brought
" down to my boat for sale, which in outward
" form (for I know no further) nobody but
" perhaps Mr. ——— could detect to be
" of Hindoo origin; and at Delhi, in the
" shop of a wealthy native jeweller, I found
" brooches, ear-rings, snuff-boxes, &c. of the
" latest models (so far as I am a judge)
" and ornamented with French devices and
" mottos." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 382.)

As Bishop Heber penetrated into the interior of India, he found the same taste as in Calcutta, for European articles and for luxuries, to prevail everywhere among the natives. Of Benares, he writes as follows:—

" But what surprised me still more than
" yesterday, as I penetrated further into it,
" were the large, lofty, and handsome dwel-
" ling houses, the beauty and apparent rich-
" ness of the goods exposed in the bazaars,
" and the evident hum of business. Benares
" is in fact a very industrious and wealthy, as
" well as a very holy city. It is the great
" mart where the shawls of the north, the
" diamonds of the south, and the muslins of
" Dacca and the eastern provinces centre;
" and it has very considerable silk, cotton, and
" fine woollen manufactories of its own; while

" English hardware, swords, shields, and " spears, from Lucknow and Monghyr, and " those European luxuries and elegancies " which are daily becoming more popular " in India, circulate from hence through " Bundlecund, Gorruckpoor, Nepaul, and " other tracts which are removed from the " main artery of the Ganges." (Bishop He- " ber's Journal, vol. i. p. 289.)

Proceeding still further into the interior of the country, and when at Nusseerabad, distant above 1000 miles from Calcutta, the Bishop continues his journal in the same strain, viz.

" European articles are at Nusseerabad,* as " might be expected, very dear; the shops are " kept by a Greek and two Parsees from " Bombay: they had in their lists all the " usual items of a Calcutta warehouse. Eng- " lish cotton cloths, both white and printed, " are to be met with commonly in wear " among the people of the country, and may, " I learned to my surprise, be bought best " and cheapest, as well as all kinds of hard- " ware, crockery, writing-desks, &c. at Pal- " lee, a large town and celebrated mart in

* Nusseerabad, near Ajmere, in the heart of the Rajepoot country.

" Marwar, on the edge of the desert, several " days' journey west of Joudpoor, where, till " very lately, no European was known to " have penetrated." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 36.)

" Chilkeah,* though a poor place to look " at, is by no means an unimportant one, at " certain seasons of the year, being one of " the principal marts of trade, both into Ke- " maoon, and through that county into Thi- " bet and Tartary. A great number of tem- " porary huts, ranged in the form of a regular " town, were already built, and many more " were building for the accommodation of the " traders who met in this emporium; and I " was surprised to find English cloths and " eastern shawls of good appearance, with " many other serviceable and valuable com- " modities, exposed for sale in huts, which " scarcely equalled a cottage cow-house in " Shropshire." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. i. p. 517.)

Of the character of Indians, their capacity, and even anxious desire for improvement; the Bishop's testimony is equally precise — and as this is a point of pre-eminent import-

* Chilkeah is situated at the foot of the mountains separating Hindostan from Nepaul, distant about 1000 miles from Calcutta, and lying due north of Moradabad and Rampour.

ance, the reader's attention is particularly requested to the following extracts.

" In the schools which have been lately " established in this part of the empire, of " which there are at present nine established " by the Church Missionary, and eleven by " the Christian Knowledge Societies, some " very unexpected facts have occurred. As " all direct attempts to convert the children " are disclaimed, the parents send them with- " out scruple. But it is no less strange than " true, that there is no objection made to the " use of the Old and New Testament as a " class-book; that so long as the teachers do " not urge them to eat what will make them " lose their caste, or to be baptized, or to " curse their country's gods, they readily " consent to every thing else; and not only " Mussulmans, but Brahmins, stand by with " perfect coolness, and listen sometimes with " apparent interest and pleasure, while the " scholars by the road side, are reading the " stories of the creation and of Jesus Christ." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 290.)

" Since my last letter, I have become ac- " quainted with some of the wealthy natives, " of whom I spoke, and we are just returned " from passing the evening at one of their " country houses. This is more like an

" Italian villa, than what one should have ex-
" pected as the residence of Baboo Hurree
" Mohun Thakoor. Nor are his carriages,
" the furniture of his house, or the style of
" his conversation, of a character less decid-
" edly European. He is a fine old man, who
" speaks English well, is well informed on
" most topics of general discussion, and talks
" with the appearance of much familiarity on
" Franklin, chemistry, natural philosophy,
" &c. His family is Brahminical, and of sin-
" gular purity of descent; but about 400
" years ago, during the Mahomedan invasion
" of India, one of his ancestors having be-
" come polluted by the conquerors intruding
" into his Zennanah, the race is conceived to
" have lost claim to the knotted cord, and the
" more rigid Brahmins will not eat with them.
" Being, however, one of the principal land-
" holders in Bengal, and of family so ancient,
" they still enjoy to a great degree the vene-
" ration of the common people, which the
" present head of the house appears to value
" —since I can hardly reconcile in any other
" manner his philosophical studies, and imi-
" tation of many European habits, with the
" daily and austere devotion which he is said
" to practise towards the Ganges (in which
" he bathes three times every twenty-four

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" hours), and his veneration for all the other " duties of his ancestors." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 293.)

" The house is surrounded by an extensive " garden, laid out in formal parterres of " roses, intersected by straight walks, with " fine trees, and a chain of tanks, fountains, " and summer-houses, not ill adapted to a " climate, where air, water, and sweet smells, " are almost the only natural objects which " can be relished during the greater part of " the year. He himself received us at the " head of a whole tribe of relations and de- " scendants, on a handsome flight of steps, " in a splendid shawl, by way of mantle, with " a large rosary of coral set in gold, leaning " on an ebony crutch, with a gold head. Of " his grandsons, four very pretty boys, two " were dressed like English children of the " same age, but the round hat, jacket, and " trowsers, by no means suited their dusky " skins so well as the splendid brocade caf- " tans and turbans covered with diamonds, " which the two elder wore. On the whole, " both Emily and I have been greatly inte- " rested with the family, both now and dur- " ing our previous interviews." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 294.)

" One of their men of rank has absolutely

" promised to found a college at Burdwan,
" with one of our Missionaries at its head,
" and where little children should be clothed
" and educated under his care. All this is
" very short indeed of embracing Christianity
" themselves, but it proves how completely
" those feelings are gone by, in Bengal at
" least, which made even the presence of a
" single missionary the occasion of tumult
" and alarm. I only hope that no impru-
" dence, or over-forwardness on our part,
" will revive these angry feelings." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 295.)

" Hearing all I had heard of the prejudices
" of the Hindoos and Mussulmans, I certainly
" did not at all expect to find that the com-
" mon people would, not only without objec-
" tion, but with the greatest thankfulness,
" send their children to schools on Bell's
" system; and they seem to be fully sensible
" of the advantages conferred by writing,
" arithmetic, and, above all, by a knowledge
" of English. There are now in Calcutta,
" and the surrounding villages, twenty boys'
" schools containing from 60 to 120 each; and
" twenty-three girls', each of 25 or 30."
(Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 300.)

" And though instances of actual conver-
" sion to Christianity are, as yet, very un-

" common, yet the number of children both
" male and female who are now receiving a
" sort of Christian education, reading the
" New Testament, repeating the Lord's
" Prayer and Commandments, and all with
" the consent, at least without the censure,
" of their parents or spiritual guides, have
" increased, during the last two years, to an
" amount which astonishes the old European
" residents, who were used to tremble at the
" name of a missionary, and shrink from the
" common duties of Christianity, lest they
" should give offence to their heathen neigh-
" bours. So far from that being a conse-
" quence of the zeal which has been lately
" shewn, many of the Brahmins themselves
" express admiration of the morality of the
" Gospel, and profess to entertain a better
" opinion of the English since they have
" found that they too have a religion and a
" Shaster. All that seems necessary for the
" best effects to follow is, to let things take
" their course, to make the missionaries dis-
" creet, to keep the government as it now is,
" strictly neuter, and to place our confidence
" in a general diffusion of knowledge, and in
" making ourselves really useful to the tem-
" poral as well as spiritual interests of the
" people among whom we live. In all these

" points there is indeed great room for im-
" provement. I do not by any means assent
" to the pictures of depravity and general
" worthlessness which some have drawn of
" the Hindoos. They are decidedly, by na-
" ture, a mild, pleasing, and intelligent race;
" sober, parsimonious, and, where an object
" is held out to them, most industrious and
" persevering." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 307.)

" On the whole they are a lively, intelli-
" gent, and interesting people; of the upper
" classes, a very considerable portion learn
" our language, read our books and our news-
" papers, and shew a desire to court our
" society; the peasants are anxious to learn
" English," &c. (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 313.)

" Those schools are, of all others, the most
" likely means to open the eyes, and ame-
" liorate the worldly and spiritual condition
" of the vast multitudes who are now not
" merely willing to receive, but absolutely
" courting instruction. Those who think
" otherwise have, I suspect, either never
" really desired the improvement which they
" affect to regard as impossible, or, by rais-
" ing their expectations, in the first instance,
" too high, they have been the cause of their

" own disappointment." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 329.)

" Of the people, so far as their natural cha-
" racter is concerned, I have been led to form,
" on the whole, a very favourable opinion.
" They have, unhappily, many of the vices
" arising from slavery, from an unsettled state
" of society, and immoral and erroneous
" systems of religion. But they are men of
" high and gallant courage, courteous, intel-
" ligent, and most eager after knowledge and
" improvement, with a remarkable aptitude
" for the abstract sciences, geometry, astro-
" nomy, &c., and for the imitative arts, paint-
" ing and sculpture. They are sober, in-
" dustrious, dutiful to their parents, and
" affectionate to their children, of tempers
" almost uniformly gentle and patient, and
" more easily affected by kindness and atten-
" tion to their wants and feelings than almost
" any men whom I have met with." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 369.)

" But though I fully believe the influence
" of Britain to have been honestly employed
" for the benefit of India, and to have really
" produced great good to the country and its
" inhabitants, I have not been led to believe
" that our Government is generally popular,
" or advancing towards popularity. It is,

" perhaps, impossible that we should be
" so in any great degree; yet I really think
" there are some causes of discontent
" which it is in our power, and which it
" it is our duty to remove or diminish. One
" of these is the great distance and haughti-
" ness with which a very large proportion of
" the civil and military servants of the Com-
" pany treat the upper and middling classes of
" natives. Against their mixing much with
" us in society, there are certainly many hin-
" drances, though even their objection to
" eating with us, might, so far as the Mussul-
" mans are concerned, I think, be conquered
" by any popular man in the upper provinces,
" who made the attempt in the right way.
" But there are some of our amusements,
" such as private theatrical entertainments,
" and the sports of the field, in which they
" would be delighted to share, and invitations
" to which would be regarded by them as ex-
" tremely flattering, if they were not perhaps
" with some reason, voted bores, and treated
" accordingly. The French, under Perron and
" Des Boignes, who in more serious matters
" left a very bad name behind them, had in
" this particular a great advantage over us,
" and the easy and friendly intercourse in
" which they lived with natives of rank, is

" still often regretted in Agra and the Dooab.
" This is not all, however. The foolish pride
" of the English absolutely leads them to set
" at nought the injunctions of their own
" government. The Tuseeldars, for instance,
" or principal active officers of revenue, ought,
" by an order in council, to have chairs always
" offered them in the presence of their Eu-
" ropean superiors, and the same by the
" standing orders of the army, should be done
" to the Soubahdars. Yet there are hardly
" six collectors in India who observe the
" former etiquette; and the latter, which was,
" fifteen years ago, never omitted in the army,
" is now completely in disuse. At the same
" time the regulations of which I speak are
" known to every Tusseeldar and Soubahdar
" in India, and they feel themselves aggrieved
" every time these civilities are neglected;
" men of old families are kept out of their
" former situation by this and other similar
" slights, and all the natives endeavour to
" indemnify themselves for these omissions
" on our part, by many little pieces of rude-
" ness of which I have heard Europeans com-
" plain, as daily encreasing among them."
(Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 371-2.)

" One fact indeed during this journey has
" been impressed upon my mind very forcibly,

" that the character and situation of the " natives of these great countries, are exceed- " ingly little known, and in many instances " grossly misrepresented, not only by the " English public in general, but by a great " proportion of those also, who, though they " have been in India, have taken their views " of its population, manners, and productions " from Calcutta, or at most from Bengal." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 379.)

" In the same holy city, (Benares) I had visited " another college, founded lately by a wealthy " Hindoo banker, and entrusted by him to the " management of the Church Missionary So- " ciety, in which besides a grammatical know- " ledge of the Hindoostanee language, as " well as Persian and Arabic, the senior boys " could pass a good examination in English " grammar, in Hume's History of England, " Joyce's Scientific Dialogues, the use of the " globes, and the principal facts and moral " precepts of the Gospel, most of them " writing beautifully in the Persian, and very " tolerably in the English character, and ex- " celling most boys I have met with, in the " accuracy and readiness of their arithmetic." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol ii. p. 388.)

" The different nations which I have seen " in India, (for it is a great mistake to suppose

" that all India is peopled by a single race, or
" that there is not a great disparity between
" the inhabitants of Guzerat, Bengal, the
" Dooab, and the Deckan, both in language,
" manners, and physiognomy, as between any
" four nations in Europe,) have of course, in
" a greater or less degree, the vices which
" must be expected to attend on arbitrary
" government, a demoralising and absurd re-
" ligion, and (in all the independent states,
" and in some of the districts which are par-
" tially subject to the British,) a laxity of
" law, and an almost universal prevalence of
" intestine feuds and habits of plunder. Their
" general character, however, has much which
" is extremely pleasing to me; they are brave,
" courteous, intelligent, and most eager after
" knowledge and improvement, with a remark-
" able talent for the sciences of geometry,
" astronomy, &c. as well as for the arts of
" painting, and sculpture. In all these points
" they have had great difficulties to struggle
" with, both from the want of models, instru-
" ments, and elementary instruction; the in-
" disposition or rather the horror, entertained,
" till lately, by many among their European
" masters, for giving them instruction of any
" kind; and now from the real difficulty which
" exists of translating works of science into
" languages which have no corresponding

" terms. More has been done, and more " successfully, to obviate these evils in the " Presidency of Bombay, than in any part " of India which I have yet visited, through " the wise and liberal policy of Mr. Elphins- " tone; to whom this side of the Peninsula " is also indebted for some very important " and efficient improvements in the adminis- " tration of justice, and who, both in amiable " temper and manners, extensive and various " information, acute good sense, energy, and " application to business, is one of the most " extraordinary men, as he is quite the most " popular governor that I have fallen in with." (Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 409-10.)

" I have been passing the last four days in " the society of a Hindoo Prince, the Raja of " Tanjore, who quotes Fourcroy, Lavoisier, " Linnæus, and Buffon fluently, has formed a " more accurate judgment of the poetical " merits of Shakspeare, than that so felici- " tously expressed by Lord Byron, and has " actually emitted English poetry very supe- " rior indeed to Rousseau's epitaph on Shen- " stone, at the same time that he is much " respected by the English officers in his " neighbourhood, as a real good judge of a " horse, and a cool, bold, and deadly shot at " a tiger. The truth is, that he is an extraor-

" dinary man, who having in early youth re-
" ceived such an education as old Schwartz,
" the celebrated missionary, could give him,
" has ever since continued, in the midst of
" many disadvantages, to preserve his taste
" for, and extend his knowledge of European
" literature, while he has never neglected the
" active exercises, and frank soldierly bearing
" which become the descendant of the Mah-
" ratta conquerors, and by which only, in the
" present state of things, he has it in his
" power to gratify the prejudices of his peo-
" ple, and prolong his popularity among them.
" Had he lived in the days of Hyder, he
" would have been a formidable ally or enemy,
" for he is, by the testimony of all in his neigh-
" bourhood, frugal, bold, popular, and insinu-
" ating. At present, with less power than
" an English nobleman, he holds his head
" high, and appears contented ; and the print
" of Buonaparte, which hangs in his library,
" is so neutralized by that of Lord Hastings
" in full costume, that it can do no harm to
" any body. To finish the portrait of Maha
" Raja Sarbojee, I should tell you that he is
" a strong built and very handsome middle-
" aged man, with eyes and nose like a fine
" hawk, and very bushy grey mustachios,
" generally splendidly dressed, but with no

" effeminacy of ornament, and looking and
" talking more like a favourable specimen of
" a French general officer, than any other
" object of comparison which occurs to me.
" His son, Raja Sewajee (so named after their
" great ancestor,) is a pale sickly looking lad
" of seventeen, who also speaks English, but
" imperfectly, and on whose account his
" father lamented with much apparent con-
" cern, the impossibility which he found of
" obtaining any tolerable instruction in Tan-
" jore. I was moved at this, and offered to
" take him in my present tour, and afterwards
" to Calcutta, where he might have apart-
" ments in my house, and be introduced into
" good English society; at the same time that
" I would superintend his studies, and pro-
" cure for him the best masters which India
" affords. The father and son, in different
" ways; the one catching at the idea with
" great eagerness, the other as if he were
" afraid to say all he wished, seemed both
" very well pleased with the proposal. Both,
" however, on consulting together, expressed
" a doubt of the mother's concurrence, and
" accordingly, next day, I had a very civil
" message through the resident, that the
" Rannee had already lost two sons, that this
" survivor was a sickly boy, that she was sure

" he would not come back alive, and it would
" kill her to part with him, but that all the
" family joined in gratitude, &c. So poor
" Sewajee must chew betel, and sit in the
" zennanah, and pursue the other amusements
" of the common race of Hindoo princes, till
" he is gathered to those heroic forms, who,
" girded with long swords, with hawks on
" their wrists, and garments like those of the
" king of spades, (whose portrait painter, as
" I guess, has been retained by this family,)
" adorn the principal room in the palace. Sar-
" bojee, the father, has not trusted his own im-
" mortality to records like these. He has put
" up a colossal marble statue of himself, by
" Flaxman, in one of his halls of audience,
" and his figure is introduced on the monu-
" ment, also by Flaxman, which he has raised
" in the mission church, to the memory of his
" tutor Schwartz, as grasping the hand of
" the dying saint, and receiving his blessing."
(Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. ii. p. 459,60,1.)

There are many other passages in the Bishop's work of the same import as the preceding extracts, all strongly corroborative of the opinions I have invariably held in regard to the natives of India. The extracts will also be found to bear on much of the matter contained in the second and other Parts about

to be published; but I shall close my notice of them, for the present, with one short remark. It is clear, from the whole tenor of the Bishop's writings, that he went to India, fully impressed with the erroneous notions commonly entertained by English gentlemen relative to the castes of the Hindoos; for he frequently expresses himself as if the influence of caste did once exist in greater rigor, and was in these latter times gradually decaying. But the fact is, and the authorities which I have quoted prove it, that the Hindoo castes are now the same as they have been for centuries. The constitution of their society would always have admitted their gratifying their tastes, and the natural bias of their minds, to the same extent as is now perceptible, and to much greater, if the gates of knowledge had been fairly opened — the means of attaining it honestly encouraged — and laws and regulations enacted, really calculated to improve their condition. But in these respects our system, both social and political, has unfortunately been fraught with obstruction and discouragement. In spite of these impediments, however, the light of knowledge, irresistible in its progress, has at length penetrated the barrier of Eastern darkness. Gleams are now perceptible, which, in the generous and intel-

ligent minds of native Indians, are likely to work the most important changes; and in the name of justice, liberality, and sound policy, the British government is now called upon to extend its fostering and protecting arm, to a people who are anxious to receive, as they will gratefully acknowledge, the blessings and benefits which that government will shortly again be empowered to bestow.

END OF PART I.

INDIA.

PART II.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE STATE AND CONDITION OF NATIVE INDIANS, UNDER FORMER GOVERNMENTS.

If then the stationary condition, and confirmed poverty, of the natives of India are not owing to immutability of character, or religious restraints, it will naturally be asked, to what are they to be ascribed? The fact being undeniable, is of course a problem requiring to be solved.

A very able writer, in the 91st No. of the Edinburgh Review, accounts for the stationary or degenerate condition of Indians generally, whilst European society has advanced, by supposing that there is a *natural* and *inherent difference in the character and temperament of the European and the Asiatic races; a more sober and robust understanding in the former; with a more reasonable, principled, and inflexible*

morality; and a superior capacity of patient and persevering thought. . " It is the want of " this knowledge (the Reviewer adds) or *rather* " of *the capacity* for *attaining* it, that consti- " tutes the palpable inferiority of the Eastern " races; and, in spite of their fancy, ingenuity, " and restless activity, condemns them *irre-* " *trievably* to vices and sufferings, from which " nations, in a far ruder condition, are com- " paratively free."*

That there are differences of character, physical and moral, among the various tribes and nations of the earth, is obvious enough to common observation; and these differences may in one sense be termed natural; but that the degradation of native Indians is ascribable to a *natural defect of character absolutely adverse to the progress of improvement*, is a position from which I am compelled to dissent; first, because that inherent defect of character which the writer supposes, is assumed—not proved; and next, because the stationary, or rather the deteriorated, state into which the

* Other writers have given a similar view of Indian society, and particularly of the Hindoo character; but under erroneous impressions, as I conceive, as to the effects produced by the system of castes and laws, supposed to regulate the minutest actions of life—neither of which, it has been shewn in Part I., apply to the present population of India.

population of India has fallen, and in which it is still chained, may be accounted for from natural and rational causes; as well as the difference which obviously exists between the greater part of the European and Asiatic families.

Indeed, it is of as much importance to refute this error, as the other of immutability; for if an "irretrievable" incapacity could be proved to be the characteristic of native Indians, it would be a powerful argument for the adaptation of an exclusive system, of some sort, to so mysterious and inexplicable a race: the very case of the monopolists would be made out, or greatly strengthened; and exclusive privilege have some grounds at least for its mystical and fallacious doctrines; but I trust to be able to shew that there is not the slightest foundation in reason, in history, or in fact, for the conclusion thus hastily and inconsiderately drawn.

The first law given to man in his fallen state, and which may be said to be the basis of all others, was that he should live by the sweat of his face, until his return to that dust, from which he was originally taken; in other words, that he should depend on his own industry and exertions, for support and prosperity. Accordingly the powers, both of mind

and body, are admirably adapted to this end. Man is, by nature, formed not only to earn his livelihood by the work of his own hands; but by the qualities of his mind, and the stimuli of his passions, to push forward without intermission, in the road to fresh acquirements and multiplied enjoyments. He has not only the cravings of hunger, like all animals, to procure for himself necessary sustenance; but cravings of the mind, which perpetually stimulate him, to add comforts to necessaries, and luxuries to comforts,—to add mental to corporeal acquirements; and in the multiplication of these it is his lot to have no natural limit placed to his wishes, his wants, or his powers. These laws being universal to the whole family of mankind, it follows that the species would every where move forward in the career of improvement, and in the multiplication of its possessions, were it not held back by some more powerful restraints. Among the more obvious of these restrictive causes are the despotic power of rulers, whether spiritual or temporal; and poverty and ignorance, so deeply rooted in the people as to deaden every hope of amendment.

It would be superfluous to endite truisms on the well-known effects of despotic power, to obstruct the progressive improvements of so-

ciety; and to keep it more or less, in all ages and countries, in a stationary state. Our business here is rather with the degree in which despotism is exercised, and has prevailed, in different parts of the known world; and the variations observable in the state of human societies, in proportion to the duration, as well as the varying degrees of its intensity. If the writer in the Edinburgh Review had adverted to the greater rigor of Asiatic over European despotisms—to their uninterrupted and unmitigated continuance from the earliest times—he might, I think, have more easily accounted for the retrocession of the inhabitants of the East, whilst those of the West were slowly advancing, than by ascribing the distinction to inherent defect, or incapacity of character. Although the Reviewer allows that our greater political freedom may be urged as a *secondary* cause of the advancement of the West, it is still, he says, a desideratum to know " by what that freedom has itself been " produced."—And this he refers to the natural superiority of the European character. But it was the fate of the Western, like the Eastern world, to be equally over-run by the barbarous hordes of the North—by conquerors, whose genius, as their deeds, are but facsimiles of each other, and whose descendants

still inhabit both regions. Between a Toork and a Moghul there is scarcely a shade of characteristic difference. Attila, Zengis Khan, and Timour Beg, the one called the "scourge of God," and the other the "firebrand of the world," carried with them the same brutal ignorance, the same savage ferocity, the same thirst of blood, and the same contempt of civilized life, into all the countries they subdued. The result, however, of the Eastern and Western conquests widely differed, and the cause admits, as I conceive, of satisfactory explanation.

In Europe the seeds of political freedom, and of moral improvement, may be said to have always been generally, however sparingly, spread; they had their root in the frame and constitution of society among our German ancestors;* and although their growth

* Even in Spain and Portugal, now degraded to almost the lowest level, the spirit of liberty formerly prevailed among the people. We are informed, that the ancient Spaniards "were "always remarkable for their bravery; and some of Hanni- "bal's best troops were brought from thence; but as the Ro- "mans penetrated further into the country than the Cartha- "ginians had done, they met with patrons whose love of li- "berty was equal to their valour, and whom the whole strength "of their empire was scarcely able to subdue. Of these the "most formidable were the Numantines, Cantabrians, and "Asturians." Hist. Spain.—Enc. Lon. p. 396.

has been long and greatly impeded by the strong hand of power, they have never under any change, been eradicated from the soil; and in a few favoured spots have branched forth to serve as a beacon, or as a warning, to neighbouring states. After the irruption and ravages of the barbarians, property soon came to be more respected, and better secured, under the Western, than under the Eastern conquerors; not that the Huns, Goths, or Vandals, were at all sparing of their rapacities; but, after settling in the conquered countries, and appropriating to themselves the lands and property of the vanquished, the higher nobles dwelling at the same time on their respective estates, and reserving the produce to themselves,* wealth was more generally distributed than under the despotisms of Asia; and, in proportion to its more general circulation and expenditure, served to encourage and sustain industry. The haughty and half independent nobles of Europe were not, as in India, viceroys or governors of provinces, appointed

* "In Europe, after the conquests of the Gothic nations, "the land was thrown in great portions into the hands of the "leading men, who had power to place the taxes where they "chose, and who took care that they should fall any where "rather than upon the land; that is, upon any body rather "than themselves." Mill's India, vol. i. p. 195.

to collect tribute or rent for the reigning prince, and removeable at pleasure; but fixed hereditary proprietors. They were not the subservient tools of arbitrary power, but often opposed to its exercise: not the mere stewards of a ravenous master—"lowly factors for another's gain"—but, having interests and possessions of their own to defend, they became a shield to their own vassals against lawless oppression on the part of the monarch. In the struggles which ensued, both parties were often driven to seek alliance, and aid, from the inferior classes; and many were the privileges and concessions which consequently resulted to commerce, and to towns, from the perpetual contentions and jealousies between these proud chieftains and their superior lord, as well as from the occasional necessities of the latter for the support of foreign war.—Hence laws and rights arose, which gave by degrees a more settled form to the governments of the West; whilst the Barbarians, adopting the refinements, and ultimately the religion, of the nations they had over-run, an amalgamation of the social body took place, which generated a feeling more favourable to forbearance and moderation than could be expected to exist, where a conquered people, in addition to profound igno-

rance, had the misfortune to be considered by their victors a distinct, degraded, and impious race. The ancient feudal system of Europe may therefore be said to have been always imbued with principles essentially anti-despotic; whilst the various republics, as well in the north, as the south, of Europe, have served to keep alive a spirit altogether unknown in the East.

The examples, too, of ancient Greece and Rome had a powerful influence in giving vigor to the spirit of improvement and of political freedom in Europe. From the earliest revival of learning, the history and literature of Greece and Rome were the themes of enthusiastic admiration, and long continued to be almost the sole objects of study. The youths of every country in Europe, from generation to generation, have, for centuries, been trained in the policies of these immortal states; the forms of their government; the wisdom of their statesmen; the brilliant deeds of their heroes and patriots; the eloquence of their orators; the sublime effusions of their poets; and the principles of their philosophers. This, indeed, is still the system of our schools; the rudiment, as it were, of instruction: and whatever may be its disadvantages, considered as an exclusive pursuit, or the errors and fallacies with which

its doctrines, moral and political, may be charged, it has still strengthened and stimulated the intellectual faculties to higher and grander attainments; and which the discovery of the art of printing has rendered imperishable.

With the aid, too, of this invaluable discovery, how wonderful have been the strides of the human mind in every branch of science and of art!—in investigating the laws and operations of nature; in enlarging our acquaintance with the habitable world and its productions; in extending our power over matter, and in promoting the comforts, the enjoyments, and the elegancies of life: and though the knowledge and civilization thus acquired, and spread, have only in some few instances burst forth into freer and better forms of government, yet no one can doubt their efficacy in moderating the excesses of arbitrary power in every one of the European states.

But above all, what might not have been naturally expected, and what in fact has not resulted, more especially since the discovery of printing, from the general diffusion in Europe of the principles and precepts of the Gospel? It is in vain for the Reviewer to ask why the religion of Christ has prevailed through the western world, more than in other

parts; for it is impossible to suppose any thing connected with the propagation of our holy faith to be accidental. At the time too of the promulgation of the Gospel in Judea, was it not natural that its first impulse should be westerly? That a code of such perfect beauty and sublimity should at first be drawn towards the metropolis of civilization and refinement?—that it should rather follow the track of St. Paul's own journeyings, than stray into the wilds of eastern barbarism and darkness? It did so; and its effects are no where disputed; moralists and historians equally agreeing that it has actually changed the face of society in the western world, and produced decided and important ameliorations of both the character and conduct of the human species.

The means therefore of gradually advancing the condition, as well as the moral improvement, of the European race has not been wanting; for, from the checks opposed to despotic power, by the very frame and constitution of society, some scope was early given to the accumulation of wealth by the industrious, some security to established rights; and, with the progress of these advantages, a greater and greater expansion of the mental faculties. Education being almost wholly directed either

to the purest of all divinity, founded on holy writ, or to familiar acquaintance with the best Greek and Roman writers, the minds of every rising generation were led, by the one, to the knowledge and practice of the most perfect virtues; or warmed, by the other, to the love of free principles, patriotic sentiments, high notions of honour, and a deadly hate of tyrants.

With such powerful incentives to improvement; with some barriers at least every where opposed to the violence, and encroachments, of despotic power; with the channels of industry no where wholly closed; and in some parts so free as to have produced examples of splendid prosperity, far surpassing any thing of the kind in past ages; the wonder is, not that the West should have advanced, while the East stood still; but that arbitrary power in Europe should so long have kept its strong holds against the hostile influences which have thus been secretly working its final overthrow and destruction.

In this argument it is not meant to contend that the progress of improvement in Europe has been altogether free from moral obstructions. On the contrary, superstitions, sophistries, and prejudices of all sorts, over which the triumph of reason and truth is always

tardy, may be classed as so many obstacles to the developement of sound principles; and of these impediments Europe has had its full share. But wherever intelligence and wealth are generally diffused, they exercise, in all societies, an influence to which the power of every despot must ultimately bow. In Europe, we accordingly find, that despotic power has retrograded, and improvement advanced, in proportion as the forms and institutions of society have admitted the extension of industrious pursuits, and the developement and free exercise of intellect. All, therefore, that is intended in the preceding sketch, is to bring to the reader's recollection, that the principles and means of improvement above delineated, did actually exist in Europe from the days of darkness to the present time; and that, being so long in active operation, they must necessarily, however slowly, have advanced both the condition and civilization of the societies in which they prevailed.

But nothing resembling the state of Europe is to be discerned in any of the Asiatic monarchies. From the earliest period of history, that pure despotism, and that alone, is here presented to us, which can only exist in the midst of surrounding darkness and poverty. Wherever it is established, these are its in-

variable and necessary concomitants; whence, acting and re-acting on each other, existences are perpetuated which bid effectual defiance to innovation or change. There are authors, and those too of deservedly high repute, who attest that, under the ancient Hindoo governments, civilization and wealth had attained to a great height in India; and allowing for the exaggerations common to Eastern writers, it is probable, if not certain, that great hoards had been formerly amassed,* and that courtly magnificence, refinement, and a corresponding progress in sundry useful and ornamental arts, naturally followed in the train of these accumulations. It has also been asserted that the nature of the old Hindoo governments was milder, and their system of taxation more moderate than in modern times; and that the very frame and constitution of society—the little republics of their towns and villages—afforded some counterpoise to the encroachments of arbitrary power. How far this may have been the case under Hindoo governments, we shall be better enabled to judge presently. In the mean time, let it be remembered that the governments of India have always been absolute monarchies. The people seem

* Vide page 251; also 140, 146, 152.

neither to have known, nor ever to have speculated on the principles, or advantages of any other; and the subservience, if not poverty, natural to this form of government, must have been the characteristic of every succeeding generation, even in the best times of Hindooism. We know, too, that several internal revolutions took place in Hindostan, besides frequent wars with the ancient Persians, to whom the Hindoo empire*, it is said, was tributary long previous to what is usually called the Mahommedan conquest. The deeper, indeed, we penetrate into the ancient history of this remarkable people, the more does it present to

* By this is probably meant one or more of the great divisions of the country in ancient times; for whatever the Brahmans may say to the contrary, there are strong grounds for doubting whether the whole of Hindostan ever was united under one great Hindoo empire.

Previous to the great Mahommedan invasion, or in the tenth century, Hindostan proper would seem to have been divided into four great kingdoms or empires—Moultan, Kanoge, Cachemire, and Goujerat. (Robertson's India, p. 332.) In Mamood the First's fifth expedition to India, or in 1008 A.D., he was opposed by a numerous confederacy of Hindoo princes. Ferishta mentions the "princes of Oojeen, Gualior, Callinger, Kanoge, Delhi, and Ajmere, as composing the confederacy, with the greatest army that had been for ages ever seen in India. Mr. Mill also observes, that the proofs of the division and subdivision of "India into a great number of petty "states meet us at every step in its authentic history."

us of the overthrow and rapid destruction of families, and states.* It is also a remarkable fact, that, throughout the Mahratta states, and the whole of the South of India, there is not one ruling family that can pretend to any considerable antiquity.

Of the literature and science of the Hindoos it is also to be observed, that it has never been extended beyond the limits of the learned few. The great mass of the people being absolutely prohibited from reading, or studying, the books which contained their knowledge, their researches, and the expansion of their mental faculties, must have been proportionately limited. They had no system of enlarged education for the many; nor any means by which knowledge could be usefully, or widely diffused. The art of printing was unknown to them. They were ignorant of the rest of the habitable world, its people, its productions, or its history. Of the Greeks and

* Mill informs us, that the picture of Hindostan given by Major Rennell is applicable to every period, even the remotest, of its history. The words of Major Rennell are these — "Rebellions, massacres, and barbarous conquests make up the "history of this fair country (which to an ordinary observer "seems destined to be the paradise of the world)—the im- "mediate effort of the mad ambition of conquering more than "can be governed by one man."—Vide Mill, Hist. vol. i. p. 448.

Romans they scarcely knew the names; or, if they recollected any thing of Alexander and his conquests, it must have been like the impression of a dream, or the remembrance of a tempest past, which grows fainter, and fainter, as it recedes from the time of occurrence. One, therefore, and the most important, of the causes of human improvement was here wanting—a sufficient field for the exercise of the highest, or most useful, of our mental powers.

Whatever knowledge the ancient Hindoos possessed, they still have, in manuscript, works, confined, as formerly, to the perusal and study of learned Brahmans. Since the introduction of printing by the British into India, some of their works have been printed and translated. Comparing these with the productions of Europe, an immeasurable disparity will be found in their respective merits; and it will thence be seen that the causes which have operated to diffuse physical, political, moral, and religious knowledge, throughout Europe, and consequently to improve the condition, and raise the intellectual character of its people, may be said to have been wholly wanting in the East.

But the bright days of Hindooism, however splendid they may have been, were doomed to a sad reverse. The repeated in-

vasions of India by Mussulmans, spread over its fertile plains like a pestilence, carrying with them desolation and death. It is well known how the religion of the Koran has been propagated by the sword; that the conquest of Pagan countries is, on the same authority, proclaimed to be a holy warfare; and that the destruction of beings, whom the holy warriors of those days designated by the most opprobrious epithets, was a work acceptable and meritorious in the sight of God.

To judge accurately of the condition of a people, and the causes of that condition, the character and principles of their rulers require to be known. Government is the corner-stone on which are based the good and evil of society; its prosperity, and moral growth, being advanced, or retarded, as the power of government is liberally, or oppressively, administered. A history that shall not be a mere narrative of royal wars and royal fooleries, but calculated to shew the operation of power, and the bearing of political and passing events on the condition of the people at large, is still a desideratum in Indian literature. In the present imperfect sketch, however, all that is proposed is to furnish the reader with the means of judging correctly of the real character and actual circumstances of those for whom we are now again about to

legislate, and whom we profess a wish, at least, to govern on the purest principles of justice — to divest Indian governments of the false glare with which they are too often surrounded, and to shew that the people are still free to receive institutions really calculated for their benefit, in preference to the continuation of systems which have only conduced to misery and degradation. In this view it is thought that a connected series of historical facts will best serve to elicit truth; and that a more accurate idea will be formed of the character and conduct of the Indian governments, and of the consequences to the governed, by noticing some of the events of the more remarkable reigns. I have accordingly selected these, that when the reader shall have seen what occurred under the best and most renowned of the rulers of India, his opinions may be easily settled in regard to the rest.

And first, of the Mussulman governments.

Between the years of our Lord 1000 and 1022,* Mamood I., of the house of Ghisni or Ghasna, invaded India twelve different times with overwhelming forces; on which occasions, besides the ordinary ravages of a Mussulman

* Ferishta's history of the Mussulman conquest commences with this period, after giving a short introductory account of Subuctagi, the father of Mamood, and the manner in which he was raised to the throne of Ghizni.

army, he is stated to have carried off the following spoils. In his four first expeditions, vast plunder, a great many elephants, and numerous slaves; among the treasure are enumerated 16 strings of jewels, each of which was valued at 180,000 rs. (£18,000.) taken from the person of Jeipal, the captive king of Lahore.

From Bimé in Nagracot,* in his 5th expedition, 700,000 golden dinars.†

700 maunds ‡ of gold and silver plate.

40 maunds of pure gold in ingots.

2000 maunds of silver bullion.

20 maunds of various jewels set.

From Tanassar, in his 6th expedition, the plunder of the *temple* of Jug-boom; the *idol and his ornaments* being carried off to Ghisni, one of which, a ruby, is said to have weighed 450 miskals.‖ On this occasion Delhi was

* Bimé in Nagracot, in Punjaab, is described as a famous fort built on the top of a steep mountain, "where the Hindoos "on account of its strength had *deposited the wealth consecrated to their idols in all the neighbouring kingdoms;* "so that in this fort there was a greater quantity of gold, "silver, precious stones, and pearls, than had been ever collected into the royal treasury of any prince on earth."—Dow's Ferishta, vol. i. p. 53.

† Dinar is a gold coin, weighing one *miskal* or 96 barleycorns. (Ayeen Acbery, p. 37.)

‡ There are two maunds in use in Bengal, one equal to 82lb. avoir. and the other to 74lb.

‖ Miskal, a weight used in weighing gold, and according to the Ayeen Acbery, p. 38, is equal to 96 barleycorns. The weight therefore of the ruby must, I apprehend, be an exaggeration.

taken and plundered; after which Mamood returned to "Ghisni, with 40,000 captives "(slaves) and much wealth; so that that city "could now hardly be distinguished in riches "from India itself."

In his 7th expedition, he plundered Lahore, and Cashmeer, "of great wealth; and having "forced the inhabitants to acknowledge the "prophet, returned with the spoil to his capi- "tal of Ghisni."

In the 8th expedition, Mamood extended his conquests over* Kinnoge, Merat, Mavin, Mattra,† Munge, and other countries, which are represented to have "suffered cruelly from "the hand of ravage and desolation." On his return to Ghisni, "he enumerated the "articles of his plunder. It consisted of 20 "millions of dirhems,‡ 53,000 captives, 350 "elephants, besides jewels, pearls, and pre- "cious effects, which could not be properly

* Dow's Ferishta, vol. i. p. 60 to 63.

† "It is said that Mamood found in Muttra *five great idols of* "*pure gold with eyes of rubies*, each of which eyes were worth "50,000 dinars. Upon *another idol* he found a sapphire "weighing 400 miskal, and the *image being melted down pro-* "*duced* 98,300 *miskal of pure gold*. Besides these, there were "above *one hundred idols of silver*, which loaded one hundred "camels with bullion."—Dow's Ferishta, vol. i. p. 62.

‡ In the Ayeen Acbery, a *direm* or *dirhem* is stated to be a silver coin, but of various value. "Fazel Khojendy says, "that in former times, *dirhems* were of two kinds; 8 *dan-* "*gees*, and 6 *dangees*." A *dangee* or *dang* is equal to 16 barleycorns. Ayeen Acbery, p. 36.

" estimated. Nor was the private spoil of the " army less than that which came into the " public treasury."*

On this occasion Mamood built a mosque of such exquisite beauty and structure, as to strike every beholder with pleasure and amazement; and to add to the fame of this magnificent work, it was dignified, and became generally known by the name of the " Celestial Bride."

In his 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th expeditions, the same scenes of plunder, cruelty, and ravage, were repeated; among others, the plunder of Sumnaat, in Guzerat, and the destruction of the *famous idol*, to save which the Brahmins offered to pay " some crores in gold,†" but the offer being declined, and the idol broken up, there was discovered in its belly " diamonds, rubies, and pearls, of a much " greater value than the amount of what the " Brahmins had offered. The king of Ghisni " found *in this temple* a greater quantity of " jewels and gold than it is thought any royal " treasury ever contained before. Besides " the great idol above mentioned, there were " in the temple some thousands of small " images in gold and silver."‡

* Dow's Ferishta, vol. i. p. 64.

† 1 Crore equal to 10 millions.

‡ Dow's Ferishta, vol. i. p. 70—77.

Mamood was the greatest prince of his time in Asia. His dominions included almost the whole of Persia; and extended from the Oxus on the N. E. side, to the mountains of Ajmere, and Malwa, on the south. His descendants continued to govern these dominions till the year 1184, on the same Mussulman principles, that is, plundering the temples and great towns; levying contributions; destroying the country with fire and sword to establish the faith; and carrying off hundreds of thousands into captivity.

In the latter year, the family of Ghisni was extinguished by a warlike prince of the house of Ghor, or Gaur, Mahomed Ghori; whose uncle, Alla, had a short time before taken the capital of Ghisni; and whether considered as an act of just retribution for the cruelties of the Ghisnians, or as marking the habits and dispositions of these barbarians, it may be here added, that Alla gave up the city to massacre, rapine, and devastation for seven days; when "pity seemed to have fled the earth, and the "fiery spirits of demons to actuate the bodies "of men;" after which, "insatiable of revenge, "he carried a number of most venerable "priests, learned men, and citizens, in chains "to Ghor, to adorn his triumph. There — we "shudder to relate it—he ordered their throats "to be cut, tempering earth with their blood,

" with which he plastered the walls of his " city."* This barbarous act of Alla's was intended to retaliate on the Ghisnians, for having first tortured, and then murdered, his brother, Seif-ul-dien, at the same time that his vizier, Seid Majud, was impaled alive.

Mahomed Ghori, having subdued all the northern provinces of the Ghisnian empire, turned his arms towards Hindostan, which country he invaded and ravaged, nine different times, between the years 1191 and 1205. It would be tedious to trace him through all his cruelties and plunder. Suffice it to say, in the words of his historian, that " the treasure, " Mahommed left behind him, is almost incre- " dible; we shall only mention as an instance " of his wealth, that he had in diamonds alone " of various sizes 500 maunds; for he had " made nine expeditions into Hindostan; " returning every time, except twice, laden " with wealth." On the capture of Benares alone, he is said to have loaded 4000 camels " with the spoils; he broke down the idols " in upwards of one thousand temples, which " he purified and consecrated to the true " God," whilst his viceroy, Cuttub, possessed himself of gold, jewels, and precious effects,

* Dow's Ferishta, vol. i. p. 143.

to an immense amount, by the plunder of other cities; " obliging the districts round to ac- " knowledge the Mussulman faith."

Mahomed having only one daughter, his generals, after his death, maintained themselves in different parts of his dominions. Cuttub, his favourite friend and faithful servant, was viceroy in Hindostan, the government of which was now fixed at Delhi. Cuttub maintained his supremacy in this quarter, and is considered the first of the Afghan, or Patan, dynasty.* He succeeded to the empire in 1205, which was now held by the longest and stoutest sword, and continued so through a long line of his successors; of whom Altumsh and Balin, if not Ferose II., were originally purchased slaves like himself; and ruled the empire, with other intermediate princes of no note, till the year 1295.

This period presents an almost uninterrupted series of warfare; either to quell in-

* Although Cuttub is said to be the first of the Afghan dynasty, he seems by birth to have been a Turk, or native of Turkistan. He was purchased as a slave, by Mahomed Ghori, the Afghan, and raised to distinction on account of his genius and military talents. The Afghans are properly the inhabitants of the mountainous tract called Gaur or Ghor, which includes Chorasan and Bactria, on the west and north; and Segistan, Candahar, and Cabul on the south.—See Mill, vol. i. p. 494 & 527. See another account, p. 535.

surrections; to extend the boundaries of the empire; or to repel foreign enemies. The Moguls, at this time, had made several irruptions, and in large bodies, into Hindostan. The same scenes of plunder, carnage, and captivity, prevailed as before; it being no uncommon thing for 50,000 and 100,000 souls to be massacred at once; in which neither sex nor age were spared. In describing these times, the historian observes, "Clemency is "a virtue which descends from God; but the "*degenerate children of India did not deserve* "*it*. There was no security to be found in "any place—the streets, the highways, were "infested by banditti. Housebreaking, rob- "bery, murder, and every other species of "villany, became a business all over the em- "pire—insurrections were heard of in every "province—numerous gangs of robbers stop- "ped all commerce and intercourse; and the "Nabobs refused or neglected to send any "account of their revenues or administra- "tion."

Of the monarchs above referred to, one only deserves attention here, having been highly eulogized by Ferishta; and that is the emperor Balin. The historian says of him, "He took particular care that none but "men of merit and family should be admit-

" ted into any office in his government; and " for this purpose he endeavoured to make " himself acquainted with the particular ta- " lents and connections of every person in " his court. As he was very assiduous in re- " warding merit, he was no less so in punish- " ing vice; for whoever misbehaved in their " station were certain of being immediately " disgraced.

" He expelled all flatterers, usurers, pimps, " and players from his court: amidst the glare " of royalty he never forgot that he was " the guardian of the laws and protector of " his meanest subjects;" with much more in the same strain—adding, that "the court " of India was, in the days of Balin, reckoned " the most polite and magnificent in the " world."

From descriptions like these, ordinary readers, or superficial observers, are apt to conclude, that such reigns were a real blessing, and that great prosperity ought to have been the result of so much distinguished merit and strict justice, had the people been capable of improvement: but let us compare this eulogium with the career of Balin, as detailed by the same author.

Balin was vizier or minister of Mamood II., who displaced him in favour of Zingani;

but the latter proving unpopular, a confederacy of Omrahs with Balin at their head, and supported by a large force, marched to Delhi, when Balin was reinstated in his former office; on which the historian observes, that "Mamood expressed great joy at seeing his "old vizier, while the flower of desire blos-"somed in the hearts of the subjects."

On the death of Mamood in 1265, who left no sons, Balin with consent of the Omrahs mounted the throne. He was originally a Turkish slave of the tribe of Alberi, and related to Altumsh; he was one of forty slaves then in favour, who entered into a solemn compact to support each other, and divide the empire after the death of Altumsh. This project was never executed; but on the accession of Balin he took care to rid himself of all that remained of this association, either by the sword or poison, among whom was his own nephew Shere, a man of great bravery and reputation.

In 1266 an army was dispatched to extirpate the Mewats, a race of people inhabiting an extensive country about 80 miles S. E. of Delhi. On this expedition above one hundred thousand persons were put to the sword. To quell insurrections in the Dooab many thousands were put to death. In Badaoon, on

another occasion, he ordered a general massacre of all the inhabitants.

Shortly after Tughril, the viceroy of Bengal, rebelled and assumed the red umbrella, with other insignia of independent royalty. This rebellion occupied Balin three years. Tughril was at first successful, and defeated the imperial army, at which Balin was so enraged, that he ordered the general who commanded his troops to be hanged at the gate of Oude. The rebellion was at length put down, after which "he ordered spits to be erected in the "market place for the execution of all the "prisoners; and it was with the utmost diffi- "culty that the Cazies, Mufties, and learned "men in a body petitioning their pardon, "could obtain it. This venerable body at "last softened Balin into mercy, and he drew "the pen of forgiveness over their crimes."*

Balin was engaged in other intestine wars. In suppressing insurrections, he always punished the offenders without mercy, on which the historian observes, "If such cruelties can "be any where excused, it must be in a "government like that of Hindostan, where "rebellions were in those days so common,

* It is not clearly stated in the history, whether "forgiveness" was extended to the whole body of prisoners, or only to the Cazies, Mufties, and learned men.

" that without the most rigorous measures, " the peace and royal authority could not be " at all established."

This is meant by Ferishta as an apology for Balin's severity; but it speaks volumes as to the state of the country, and the condition of its miserable inhabitants. Balin died in 1286.

At this time the Mussulman conquests had not been extended to the Deccan; but the wealth accumulated in the southern provinces soon attracted their rapacity. Alla, the nephew and son-in-law of Ferose II., being entrusted by the emperor with the government of Kurrah*, raised a force, and invaded the Deccan in 1293—4, on which occasion he took Deogire (Dowlutabad), another fortress believed by the Hindoos to be impregnable; and after massacring and torturing thousands of the inhabitants, Brahmins and others, he carried off with him, as his portion of the plunder,

600 maunds of pure gold,
7 maunds of pearls,
2 maunds of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires,
1000 maunds of silver,
4000 pieces of silk,

* A sircar or district within the Soubah of Allahabad.—Ayeen Acbery.

and a long list of other precious commodities, (Ferishta observes,) "that surpass all belief."

On his return to Kurrah he pretended to be afraid of repairing to Delhi, to lay the spoils at the emperor's feet; and after much artifice and intrigue, at length persuaded Ferose, who was much attached to him, to visit him at Kurrah. The emperor proceeded down the river; and entered Alla's camp unarmed. Alla threw himself at the emperor's feet; but two assassins prepared for the purpose despatched Ferose on the spot; and his head was carried on a spear in triumph through the camp. Alla marched with his army to Delhi; got himself proclaimed emperor; and shortly afterwards massacred the rest of the imperial family. The cruelty, treachery, and rigor of Alla's reign correspond with its bloody commencement. Puffed with the pride of immense wealth and power, he at one time projected the establishment of a new religion, of which he was to be the prophet; and at the same time the conquest of the world;—but from these projects he was dissuaded by the arguments of a priest; and, towards the latter part of his reign, was himself convinced that "there were heads in the world as hard as his "own."

The incursions of the Moguls became at this time frequent. Hitherto they had always been repulsed; when the prisoners taken were inhumanly massacred. Insurrections in the provinces were also incessant; so that the work of war and blood was perpetual. On these occasions the butchery extended not only to the parties directly concerned, but to their vassals, dependents, and even acquaintance of the same tribe. "Not even weeping "mothers, nor the smiling infants at their "breasts, were either pitied or spared." Massacres, indeed, of this description, were common to almost every reign;—but the anarchy and confusion of the provinces, in the time of Alla, induced him to call a council of his Omrahs to reform the disorders of the state; and as the reforms decided on by this council are calculated to throw light on the manners of the times, the spirit of a Mussulman despotism, and its necessary influence on the character and condition of the population at large, I shall here notice them:—

First. Wine was prohibited—excessive drunkenness, it appears, having been a fashionable vice in these Asiatic courts, in spite of the prohibition of their prophet.

Second. Marriages of the nobility were not to be ratified without the special licence

of the emperor — to prevent connexions and associations dangerous to the state.

Third. The unequal division of property appearing to be a cause of disturbance, from the wealth of the empire being accumulated in a few hands;* to remedy the evil, Alla seized upon the wealth, and confiscated the estates, of Mussulmans and Hindoos without distinction. He thus accumulated immense treasures; and reduced his subjects to a level over all the empire. No man durst entertain his friends without a written permission from the vizier.

Fourth. All emoluments were cut off from the different offices, which were filled with men, whose indigence and dependence rendered them implicitly obedient to the dictates of government.

Fifth. "He ordered *a tax of half the real* " *annual produce of the lands to be raised over* " *all the empire: and to be regularly transmitted* " *to the Exchequer.*"—"The farmers, at the " same time, were confined to a certain por- " tion of land, and to an appointed number " of servants and oxen to cultivate the same. " No grazier was permitted to have above a

* Where plunder and extortion were almost the only sources of wealth, it was naturally confined to the most successful, or most daring, robbers.

" certain number of cows, sheep, and goats;
" and a tax was paid out of them to Govern-
" ment. So strictly did the emperor look
" after the behaviour of the collectors, and
" other officers, of the revenue, that many of
" them, who formerly kept great retinues,
" were obliged to dismiss them; and to have
" all the menial offices of their families per-
" formed by their wives and children. Nei-
" ther were they permitted to resign their em-
" ploys, till they found others as capable as
" themselves to execute the duties of their
" office."

Alla's historian remarks that "these regu-
" lations were good;" but admits, at the same time, that they were "arbitrary and
" severe."

On another occasion Alla increased his forces to a prodigious number, to repel the incursions of the Moguls; but finding his revenues and treasures together could not support this force more than six years, he reduced their pay. As a compensation to the army, he had recourse, at the same time, to the notable expedient of lowering proportionably the price of horses, arms, and provisions; settling by an edict, which he strictly enforced throughout the empire, the price of every article at about half the former rate.

Alla now turned his arms again to the plunder and destruction of the unhappy Hindoos in, and bordering on, the Deccan. One of his generals, Moultani, in the year 1305, took, and plundered, as usual, Ugein, Mindu, Daranagurri, Chanduri, and Gallon. The whole of Malwa was thus reduced.

In 1306, his great favourite, and general, Cafoor (also a slave originally), entered the Deccan, subdued the country of the Mahrattas, besieged Deogire, and received from Ramdeo, the king, great presents as the price of peace.

In 1307, Cafoor entered Telingana,* a Hindoo kingdom, laying it waste with fire and sword.

In 1310, he took Arenkel, or Warankul, the capital, by assault, massacring the garrison without mercy. The prince, driven to extremity, purchased peace of the conqueror with

* Telingana, in the Deccan, may be said to have Cicacole and Pulicat, near Madras, for its northern and southern limits along the line of coast; but embracing a large tract of country inland both to the north and south of the river Godaveri, and bounded on the west by the country anciently termed the Carnatic, for which, vide note in next page.

According to the Ayeen Acbery, Telingana was only a sircar or division of the Soobah Berar.

300 elephants, 7000 horses, and money and jewels to a great amount; agreeing also to pay an annual tribute.

In 1311, Cafoor was sent to reduce Dhoor-Summund and Maber, in the Deccan; where he had heard there were *temples very rich in gold and jewels.* After three months' march from Delhi, the army reached these countries; and, as the historian observes, " began their inhuman cruelties." Cafoor defeated the king of the Carnatic,* took him prisoner, and ravaged his whole country. In the temples he found " a prodigious spoil in " idols of gold, adorned with the most precious " stones, and other rich effects." Being about to return with the plunder to Delhi, other treasures of immense amount, concealed near the camp, were disclosed to Cafoor. These were dug up, placed on elephants, and conveyed to Delhi, where he presented the emperor with

* The central parts of the Deccan extending from near the Godaveri north, to Panlghaut in the south. The modern Carnatic was never known by that name to Indian geographers, but by the name of Drauveda.

Dhoor Summund, alias Dhoor Summooder, was at this time the capital of Bellal Deo, sovereign of the Carnatic. (Wilkes's S. of India, vol. i. p. 5 & 10.)

312 elephants,
20,000 horses,
96,000 maunds of gold,*
several chests of jewels, pearls, and other precious things.

On this expedition the soldiers were said to throw away silver, as too cumbersome, when gold was found in such plenty. Cafoor invaded the Deccan a fourth time, in 1312, ravaging the country, and raising the tribute on the helpless inhabitants.

Alla I. died in 1316, from which time, to 1397-8, the imperial throne was an object of constant contention; and the prize of the

* On this spoil the translator of Ferishta adds the following curious note: "This treasure may appear to exceed all "belief in the eyes of Europeans. But if we consider the "Hindoos as a mercantile people, and *not disturbed perhaps* "*by wars for thousands of years;* and add to this that it "is the invariable custom of that race, *to live with the ab-* "*stinence of hermits in the midst of wealth,* our wonder "will cease, and the credit of our author remain entire. The "gold amounts to about one hundred millions of our money." That the plunder on this and other occasions was great and unsparing there can be no doubt; but the amount here given, notwithstanding the belief of Col. Dow, is somewhat startling. The greatest wonder, however, is, that a man of research into the ancient history of the Hindoos, and a personal observer of their manners and customs, should have put together so much fallacy and inconsistency as is to be found in the above note.

most successful in intrigue and bloodshed. It is sickening to read the atrocious crimes that marked the transactions of this period. I shall only notice them generally, to shew that the chain of circumstances which may be supposed to have had their influence on the character and condition of the people was, throughout, unbroken and unchanged.

As regards the court itself, consisting of the emperor, his family, and the nobles or Omrahs, we are presented with a picture of the basest passions that can degrade the human heart; of excessive licentiousness, unnatural vices, and crimes, openly perpetrated; of relatives and brothers conspiring against each other; of children traitors to their own parents; and of princes wading to a throne through the murder, and torture, of all of their own blood whom they could seize, as well as of every Omrah,* whose power they had reason

* Mubarick I., whose life was saved, and who was afterwards raised to the imperial dignity by the commander of the foot-guards, ordered this officer and his lieutenant to be inhumanly murdered, after his elevation, "on no better pretence "than that they presumed too much on the services they had "done him."

Mill, speaking of the emperor, says, "He was the slave of "every species of intemperance, and void of every humane or "manly quality which could procure the indulgence of man-"kind to his faults."

to dread. Slaves, and men of abandoned principles, were promoted to the highest dignities; and, when sufficiently powerful to aspire to the throne, hesitated not to assassinate the benefactor who had raised them. In short, perfidy, violence, torture, assassination, together with personal vices and indecencies, too shocking to mention, were carried to such a pitch, that the historian himself is forced to exclaim of these monsters, that "their name "and reign are too infamous to have a place "in the records of literature, did not our duty "oblige us to this disagreeable task; but not-"withstanding, we have in some places thrown "the veil of oblivion over circumstances too "horrid to relate." Speaking in another place of the pedigrees, as well as the crimes, of the kings of the Patan empire, many of whom rose from the lowest origin, he adds; "They make such a wretched figure in history, "that we could wish to omit them, were it not "to shew how far the depravity and corrup-"tion of a people can plunge them into the "sink of slavery, and subject them to the "vilest of men."

But this state of distraction was not confined to the capital. The Soubahdars, or viceroys of provinces, availed themselves of it to become independent princes, and everywhere

rebelled. To quell these insurrections, large and destructive armies were constantly in motion, with plunder, torture, and death in their train. Indeed, the plunder of the provinces must have been carried to an excess of which no adequate calculation can be made; for, during the disorders at Delhi, immense sums issued from the imperial treasury* to be lavished on favourites; to bribe Omrahs of influence; and to secure the services of the army; all of which, Ferishta supposes, must have been supplied from the wealth—that is, from the plunder—of the Deccan.

One of the transactions of this period related by Ferishta, is the invasion of Malabar† by an imperial army under Chusero the catamite, whom the emperor Mubarick I. invested with the ensigns of royalty. Chusero remained in Malabar one year, plundering the country of vast wealth, and then carried off "120 "elephants, a perfect diamond of 168 ruttys,‡

* Vide pages 251—254.

† The country called by Ferishta, "Malabar," would seem to be that along the hilly belt, or summit of the Ghauts, extending from Soonda to Coorg.—Wilkes's S. of Ind. vol. i. p. 10.

‡ A *rutty* is stated in Dow's Ferishta to be equal to seven-eighths of a carat. If by "carat" is meant the goldsmiths' weight of four grains, this diamond would be equal in weight to 588 grains, or one ounce and 108 grains = 147 carats.

Ferishta has given an account of many other precious stones

" with other jewels and gold to a great " amount." With this wealth Chusero aspired to the imperial throne, and succeeded in mounting it after a series of conspiracies and assassinations, a general massacre in the pa-

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of almost incredible size and weight found by the Mussulman conquerors in their plunder of various Hindoo temples. To judge of their value, we may compare this diamond with that of the largest which are known in Europe.

The great diamond of the king of Portugal, weighing 1680 carats, is valued at.....	£224,000,000
The diamond in the sceptre of Russia weighs 779 carats, and is valued at	4,854,728
N.B. This diamond was stolen from a Malabar idol by a French grenadier.	
The diamond of Aurungzebe weighed 279$\frac{9}{10}$ carats, and was valued at	399,000
Another diamond of the king of Portugal, weighing 215 carats, is valued at.....	388,290
The diamond of the emperor of Germany weighs 139$\frac{1}{2}$ carats, and is valued at..	114,996
The diamond of the king of France, called the "*Regent*," weighing 136$\frac{3}{4}$ carats, is valued at	218,750

According to these valuations a diamond of 168 ruttys, or 147 carats, supposing it to be of equal purity with the "regent," and the last-mentioned Portugal diamond, may be taken to be worth about £255,000 sterling.

lace, and the murder of his benefactor, the emperor Mubarick, with his own hands.

In a subsequent reign the imperial officers were ordered to encrease the revenues generally. In some provinces the imposts were tripled. Omrahs were invested with governments, on condition of sending annually immense sums to the royal treasury. Copper money was ordered, by public decree, to pass for silver; and such was the extent of oppression, distress, and cruelty, that "the farmers "were forced to fly to the woods, and to maintain "themselves by rapine. The lands being left "uncultivated, famine began to desolate whole "provinces, and the sufferings of the people "obliterated from their minds every idea of "government and subjection to authority."*

Of one of these monsters, Mahomed III. (1340), it is recorded by Ferishta, that, allured by the wealth of the Deccan, he took the fancy, twice in the course of his reign, of removing the seat of empire from Delhi to Dowlutabad, and each time forcibly carried off the inhabitants, to their great misery, to the latter city; leaving, as Ferishta observes, the noble metropolis of Delhi a habitation for owls, and

* Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii.

wild beasts of the desert. Ferishta adds a paragraph well worthy of note by those who, without due consideration, ascribe the present state of native Indians to inherent or immutable degeneracy of character.

" About this time the taxes were so heavily " imposed, and exacted with such rigor and " cruelty, by the officers of the revenue, that " the whole extent of that fertile country be- " tween the two rivers Ganges and Jumna " was particularly oppressed. The farmers, " weary of their lives, in one day set fire to " their own houses, and retired to the woods " with their families and cattle. The tyrant " having received intelligence of this circum- " stance, ordered a body of troops to massacre " these unhappy people, if they resisted ; and " if they should be taken, to put out their eyes. " Many populous provinces were, by this in- " human decree, laid waste, and remained so " for several years. The colony of Dowlata- " bad was also in great distraction ; the peo- " ple without houses, without employment, " were reduced to the greatest distress. The " tyrannies of the cruel Mahomed exceeded in " short any thing we have met with in history ; " of which the following is a horrid instance. " When he remained at Delhi, he led his " army out to hunt, as is customary with

" princes. When they arrived in the territory " of Birren, he plainly told them that he came " not to hunt beasts, but men; and without " any obvious reason, began a general mas- " sacre of the wretched inhabitants. He had " even the barbarity to bring home some " thousands of their heads, and to hang " them over the city walls. Upon another " occasion, he made an excursion of the same " nature towards Kinnoge, and massacred all " the inhabitants of that city, and the adjacent " country for many miles; spreading terror and " desolation wherever he turned his eyes." *

Insurrections, civil war, and conspiracies, were consequently perpetual. At one time Delhi presented the spectacle of two empe-

* Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 31.

Of Mahomed III. Ferishta relates an anecdote, on which Mill makes a pertinent and pleasant remark. — Mahomed being employed in quelling insurrections — the constant occupation, indeed, of the emperors of Hindostan, lost, — on one occasion, a great part of his army by a plague; on which Mill observes — " But what, to the mind of Mahomed, was of " more importance than the lives of half the inhabitants of " Hindostan, he himself was afflicted with the tooth-ach. He " even lost a tooth. This he commanded to be buried with " solemn pomp, and a magnificent tomb was erected over it." — Mill, vol. i. p. 518.

† Mamood III. and Nuserit Shah. — Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 76.

rors † residing for three years in the same city, and deluging the streets almost daily with blood. In these sanguinary struggles, Bengal, the Deccan, and other provinces, were for a time lost to the empire; confusion prevailed in all parts; the imperial power was alone sustained by the armies, who plundered the disturbed districts for their own gain, whilst wreaking their master's vengeance on his unhappy subjects, often without crime, provocation, or distinction.

To add to the confusion of this unhappy period, or in 1397, Timour Beg, commonly called Tamerlane, "the firebrand of the "world," entered Hindostan, at the head of an irresistible force. His grandson, Mahomed Jehangir, had crossed the Indus the year before, and established himself in Moultan; but Timour now pressed forward like a foaming torrent, spreading around destruction and death. In the cities and towns which he took and pillaged on his march to Delhi, the inhabitants, as well as the garrison, were inhumanly ordered to be massacred; and, in some instances, when any particular resistance was made to his arms, or difficulty experienced in the levy of contributions, the city itself was reduced to ashes. This was the fate of Tulmubini, Battenize, Surusti,

Fatteabad; Rahib, Amirani, and Jonah.* He divided his army under different chiefs, who carried fire and sword through all the provinces of Moultan and Lahore; and afterwards rendezvoused on the approach to Delhi, taking first the fort of Lowni by assault, and putting the garrison to the sword. On his arrival before Delhi, Timour proceeded to reconnoitre the citadel with 700 horse only; which tempted the emperor to sally on the Moguls with a large force. The Omrah, who led the attack, was taken prisoner, and instantly ordered to be beheaded. At this time Timour had an immense number of Indian prisoners in his camp; and on its being reported to him that some of them had expressed satisfaction at the little check he had experienced in reconnoitring Delhi, "he gave orders to put all "above the age of fifteen to the sword; so "that on that horrid day 100,000 men were "massacred in cold blood." Delhi was shortly afterwards taken, and pillaged; and the inhabitants being laid, besides, under contributions, of which some of the Omrahs were unwilling, or unable, to pay their quotas, a general massacre commenced, in which "some "streets were made impassable by the heaps

* Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 82—85.

" of dead. The Hindoos, according to their " manner, seeing their wives and daughters " ravished and polluted, their wealth seized " by the hand of rapine, and they themselves " insulted, beat, and abused; at length with " one consent shut the city gates, set fire to " their houses, murdered their wives and chil- " dren, and ran out like madmen against their " enemies.* But the desperate courage of " the unfortunate Delhians was at length " cooled in their own blood; they threw down " their weapons, and submitted themselves " like sheep to the slaughter."

Timour only remained fifteen days in Delhi; he caused himself to be proclaimed emperor; confirmed the Soubahdars, who had submitted to him in their governments; and proceeded by the way of Cabul to Samarcand, ravaging as before the countries through which he passed, and murdering without mercy the hapless inhabitants. For his barbarous cruelties in Hindostan, this monster left behind him the name, or title, of Hillâk Khan, or the destroying prince.

This dreadful invasion occurred in the reign of Mamood III. a weak and unworthy prince, neither a warrior nor a politician, con-

* This in India is called a Joar, for which see page 259.

sequently a tool in the hands of a cruel and perfidious minister. All, however, that the minister, Eckbal, could retain of the empire, after the departure of Timour Beg, was the country between the Jumna and Ganges, or rather a small district round the metropolis. Mamood died in 1413, and with him the empire fell from that race,* distinguished by the name of the dynasty of Ghor.

Chizer, the next emperor, was said to be a Seyed, consequently of the race of the prophet Mahomed. Timour had confirmed him in the government of Lahore, and Moultan, where he assumed the title of king; and fighting his way to the throne of Delhi, he pretended to hold it for the great Timour, ordering the coin to be struck in his name.

From this time, to the accession of the celebrated Baber in 1525, the empire continued in a distracted and dismembered state. The throne of Delhi, with the imperial titles, fell to the lot of him who was strong enough to seize and to maintain it, whether by force of arms, by treachery, or by assassination. But more especially from the middle of the 15th century, the whole of Hindostan was di-

* A race of Turks or Toorks, who were adopted slaves of the emperor Mahomed Ghori.

vided into separate states. In the Deccan, Guzerat, Malwa, Jionpoor, Bengal, the eastern provinces, and the Punjaab, there were princes who assumed the style and dignity of kings. Other provinces became also independent of the capital; so that in 1447, the city of Delhi, and a few small districts, remained only to the emperor.

But the dismemberment of the provinces was in no respect conducive to the benefit or comfort of the people. The princes who had established their independence, had not changed their nature — they were equally faithless, and unfeeling, with the occupiers of higher thrones. In constant hostility with each other, and having separately to resist the Imperial armies, they could only strengthen themselves by exacting greater tribute, and therefore adding to the oppressions under which their subjects groaned. The intervening period, therefore, between Chizer and Baber, is only remarkable for a constant state of hostility and devastation, in which the different chieftains and omrahs, in their contests for power and dominion, left nothing untried, which plots and counterplots, the most unbridled perfidy, and assassination, could effect; whilst the Hindoos had to endure all the calamities incident to armies in perpetual

march, whose avarice and rapacity no contributions or exactions would satiate; and who, with as little compunction, murdered or enslaved these unhappy victims by thousands and tens of thousands at a time.*

Baber was a lineal descendant of Timour Beg, the Mogul; he was the grandson of Sultan Abu Seid; whose youngest son, Amer, the father of Baber, had raised himself to the united thrones of Indija and Ferghana; and Sultan Abu Seid was a great grandson of the great Timur, "Lord of Ages." He was also a descendant of Zinghis Khan; and thus appears to have united in himself the blood of two of the greatest conquerors of the world. Baber's historians represent him as a prince of great humanity and generosity; ascribe to him a high reputation for justice and honor; and by his good deeds to "have dis-" armed vice, and made the wicked the wor-" shippers of his virtue." But a Mussulman writer considers every good quality to be combined in the character of a brave and successful

* In 1429 on an invasion of the province of Debalpoor, 40,000 Hindoos were computed to have been massacred, besides a great number carried away prisoners. Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 114. In 1432 Lahore was surprised by the governor of Cabul, and subjected to a horrid scene of massacre and depredation. Ibid. p. 116.

warrior. With more moderation and forbearance, generally speaking, than most of his ferocious predecessors, the principal feature in Baber's character was his military genius, and talent for war; to which every other consideration gave place. He was much addicted to pleasure, and for many years to excessive drinking; but war, eternal war, was the chief occupation of his eventful life. He succeeded to his father's dominions when only 12 years old. Two of his uncles, at this time, occupied the neighbouring thrones of Samarcand and Buduckshan. With these relatives, and with the still more formidable chief of the Usbecs, he seems to have been in a perpetual state of warfare for upwards of twenty years; sometimes extending his own dominions; and sometimes, at the lowest ebb of fortune, obliged to fly to some neighbouring chieftain for security, with forty, sixty, or a hundred followers. Although his vigor and genius enabled him to retrieve his affairs, and, after these disasters, to be soon again in the field, he was at length driven from all his own, and family, possessions beyond the Oxus.

In this extremity, Baber turned his thoughts to Cabul, which had been in the possession of his uncle Ali; but during the minority of Rysac, Ali's son, had been seized by a neigh-

bouring prince. On his way to Cabul he was hospitably received by Chusero, king of Kunduz;* but, stirring up a faction in Chusero's court, he gained over 7000 of the king's troops to his own interest, and obliged Chusero to fly, leaving his troops, his treasure, his capital, and every thing in the possession of Baber.

Thus armed, the "just" and "generous" Baber proceeded to possess himself of Cabul, which he accomplished by first driving out the usurper, and afterwards subduing a revolt which had been raised in favour of his cousin Rysac, the rightful heir. Baber defeated Rysac, and for this first offence—of endeavouring to possess himself of his own inheritance—he was graciously pardoned; but Baber taking him again, after a second disturbance in the country, "he suffered the usual reward of "traitors."

Baber next possessed himself of Kandahar; and thinking himself strong enough to recover his former family dominions, he marched with a large army, and retook Bochara, retaking also Samarcand for the third time; but

* Kunduz, or Koondez, is a kingdom, or principality, lying north of Cabul, and on the opposite side of the Himala ridge of mountains.

from these dominions he was again finally driven by the Usbecs, and returned to Cabul in 1518.

Baber now turned his thoughts towards Hindostan; for his restless genius would not allow him to be quiet. He first attacked the mountaineers of Bajoar; and, having defeated them, carried some thousands into captivity. For the invasion of Hindostan, he had no other pretence than that it formerly belonged to the house of Timur, whence it was proper the reigning prince should relinquish possession in his favour. Baber accordingly marched his army into Punjaab, and advanced to Berah, raising heavy contributions on the country, on the plea of withholding his troops from plunder. He next took the fort of Pirhala, where he found a considerable treasure; and appointing a governor to the conquered provinces, returned to Cabul.

In his second and third expeditions to Hindostan, he advanced still farther into the country; and at Seidpoor, meeting with some resistance, he put all the people to the sword, gave up their wealth to plunder, and carried away captive their children and wives.

In his fourth expedition he took Lahore, and Dabulpoor, after great slaughter, putting all the garrison of the latter place to the sword.

On the fifth expedition, in 1525, Baber reached Delhi. He was opposed at Shahabad, by a detachment of the emperor Ibrahim's army, which he defeated after an obstinate conflict. The victors took seven elephants, and a great number of prisoners, whom Baber put to death in cold blood, to strike terror into his enemies.

But the great battle, which decided the fate of this once mighty empire, was fought at Panniput, when Baber, with a very inferior force, totally defeated Ibrahim, who fell in the action after immense slaughter; and Baber shortly afterwards, entering Delhi, was proclaimed emperor of Hindostan.

It is here again deserving of remark, that notwithstanding the long-continued distractions of the empire, and the constant state of warfare in which the imperial armies were engaged, with foreign or domestic foes, the treasury at Delhi was still found to contain immense wealth,* which Baber distributed with great generosity, if not prodigality, among his omrahs, his troops, and in presents to Cabul, and other parts.

Notwithstanding this success, Baber's authority was resisted by almost every one of the

* Vide pages 251—254.

provincial governors, or viceroys. His difficulties were consequently great; but his genius and vigour never deserted him; and the remainder of his life and reign was employed in bringing over, or subduing, the refractory provinces; so that at his death, in 1530, his empire in Hindostan was probably as extensive as that of his predecessor Ibrahim; who, on Baber's fifth expedition, nominally possessed all the countries between the Indus and the province of Bahar. Upon one occasion, he had to contend with a very large force, assembled by the discontented omrahs, headed by Mahmood, son of the Emperor Secunder. This force he totally routed near Biana, and ordered, to perpetuate the memory of the victory, a pyramid to be erected near the field, and stuck round with the heads of the slain.

I have thought it necessary to state these, as some of the transactions of Baber's reign, that an undue estimate might not be formed of the character of a man so celebrated and eulogized as he has been by his admirers, or of the influence of his acts on the condition of his subjects. The fact is, that his genius was purely warlike; and military fame, women, and drinking, the ruling passions of his soul. He has left behind him no ordinance, regulation, nor project of improvement calculated to

promote the real interests of his people; and when, in particular, we read, in his own memoirs, accounts of battles, and other events, in which the hapless Hindoos are styled "dogs"—"damnable heathen"—"atheistical "wretches"—"only fitted to people the lowest "regions of hell," with other opprobrious designations—it is impossible to conceive that the mind of Baber was ever imbued with principles or designs of a nature to relieve "the accursed" from that state of desolation and degeneracy into which they had been plunged for ages, by a succession of inhuman depots.

But the spirit of these times, and its necessary influence on society, are well exemplified in the fate and fortunes of his son and successor Humaioon. The talents of Baber being purely those of a military conqueror, he did nothing to ensure the stability of that empire which his arms had acquired. Accordingly, on the succession of Humaioon—himself a man of peaceable habits—the empire soon became the scene of insurrection and anarchy. Throughout his reign, he had to contend with conspiracies on the part of his two brothers, Camiran, and Hindal. At one time the two brothers united against Humaioon; but both having designs on the throne of Delhi, they separated. They were first traitors to their

sovereign and brother; then to each other. The omrahs, who felt strong enough, also separately aspired to the throne. One of them, Shere Khan, governor of Chunar,* raised a large force. Humaioon marched to reduce this rebel. On the armies approaching, a peace was concluded, signed, and ratified by mutual oaths. The emperor, trusting to the faith of his enemy, permitted a free intercourse between both armies; of which the perfidious Shere Khan took advantage to surprise the imperial camp, and routed the whole army with tremendous slaughter; the emperor saving himself only by swimming across a river, and flying, with a few of the survivors, to Agra.

It is needless to detail the other insurrections and wars in which Humaioon was engaged. It would, in fact, only be to repeat similar acts of perfidy and devastation to those before noticed. Suffice it to say, that Shere Khan, after this act of treachery, marched with his whole force to the capital, defeated Humaioon in a pitched battle, and finally

* Chunar is a strong fortress in the province of Oude, of which Shere Khan possessed himself, and assumed independence after the death of the emperor Ibrahim. — Dow's Fer. vol. ii. p. 223. For further particulars of this transaction, see page 175.

established himself on the throne of Delhi. Humaioon, in the mean time, seeking the support of different princes, or viceroys, who alternately aided and betrayed him, was at length obliged to fly, with a few followers, across the sandy desert near the Indus; and, after extreme distress, and suffering, from want of water, finally found shelter with the king of Persia.

The life of Shere Khan, who is handed down to us as a man of uncommon genius and resolution, is also highly characteristic of Mussulman despotisms and manners. Shere's father held a Jagier* in the soobah of Jionpoor, which Shere was appointed to manage, but jealousies arising in the family, he relinquished the management in favour of Soliman, his half-brother, and repaired to Delhi. There he first intrigued to get a grant of this estate from the emperor, during his father's life; but failing in this, he obtained it after his father's death, and dispossessed all his brothers by

* Jagier, Jagheer, or Jaghire, an assignment to an individual of the government share of the produce of a portion of land. There were two kinds of Jaghires—one called bodily or personal Jaghire, being for the support of the person of the grantee; the other called Jaghire of the head, or an assignment for the support of any public establishment, particularly of a military nature.—Gloss. Fifth Rept.

force of arms. Being a man of parts, and learning, he was employed for some time as tutor to Jellal, son of Mahmood, king of Behar; both of whom he betrayed, particularly Jellal, his pupil, whom, during his minority, he dispossessed of the country, and seized it to himself. The governor of Chunar, a very strong fort, having been murdered by one of his sons, all of whom had conspired to murder their father's favorite wife, Ladi Malleki, and in defençe of whom the father fell; the government passed into the hands of Ladi Malleki. The possession of this fort was of great importance to Shere Khan, who to obtain it, married Ladi Malleki, and thus acquired great power; for besides the dependent districts, there was considerable treasure in the place.

In the reign of Baber, Shere Khan joined the insurgent Mahmood, son of the emperor Secunder Lodi, who had raised a force to take possession of Jionpoor. On this occasion it was agreed between Mahmood and Shere Khan, that in the event of success, the former was to be guaranteed in the sovereignty of Jionpoor, and the latter in that of Behar; but an imperial army being sent against these rebels in the time of Humaioon, Shere Khan deserted his confederate just as the armies were about to engage, writing to the Mogul

general as follows: "that he esteemed himself "a servant of Baber's family, to whom he "owed his advancement, and that he would "be the cause of defeating the Afghans next "day." Mahmood was accordingly obliged to fly, and died shortly afterwards.

Having at one time lost the fort of Chunar, which he was obliged to surrender to the imperial arms, he turned his thoughts to the possession of another impregnable fortress—Rhotas,—which he secured by stratagem. The Raja Berkis had been always his friend, and in the name of friendship he entreated, and at length pursuaded, the Raja to receive his family and treasures into the fort, for security, during an invasion which he then projected of Bengal. The females, and supposed treasures, were accordingly conveyed to the fort in covered chairs; but the money-bags were filled with bullets, and the chair-porters were picked soldiers; and no sooner had they got a footing in the fort, than "like wolves they rushed "out among the sheep, and began to dye the "fold with blood." Berkis with a few followers escaped to the woods, and the traitor remained in secure possession of the fort.

Shere Khan had once entered the service of Baber, and thereon projected a scheme for ridding Hindostan of all the Moguls. Finally,

he violated his oath and faith to Humaioon in the manner above mentioned; and having thus betrayed every soul who had befriended him through life, established himself at length, in 1542, on the throne of Delhi.

The remainder of Shere Khan's reign was passed in reducing refractory provinces, with all the cruelty and devastation consequent on civil wars. In 1543 he marched against Puran Mull, a Hindoo prince, and invested him in the fort of Rasein, on no other pretence than because the Raja kept no less than two thousand concubines, which the emperor resented as an encroachment on the privileges of royalty. A capitulation was solemnly agreed to; and the Raja allowed to march out with his garrison, arms, treasure, family, and effects. The Raja, trusting to the faith which had been pledged, encamped at a short distance; but Shere, unmindful of the treaty, surrounded the Rajaputs, 4000 in number, and ordered every soul to be massacred. On another occasion 10,000 Rajaputs were put to the sword, after he had deceived their Raja by a forged letter.

Shere Khan at length closed his career of treachery and blood, being killed by the explosion of powder in a battery before Callinger in 1545. His historian mixes up some

praise in the delineation of his character; in respect to which it must be remembered, that ambition, and great talents for war, comprise every virtue in the estimation of a Mogul, or rather give a covering to every crime. Ferishta speaks of him in the following terms: "The character of Shere is almost equally "divided between virtue and vice. Public "justice prevailed in the kingdom, while pri- "vate acts of treachery dishonored the hands "of the king. He seemed to have made "breach of faith a royal property, which he "would by no means permit his subjects to "share with him. We ought perhaps to as- "cribe this vice to the ambition of Shere. "Had he been born to the throne, he might "have been just, as he was valiant and politic "in war; had he confined his mind to his es- "tate, he might merit the character of a vir- "tuous chief; but his great soul made him "look up to the empire, and he cared not by "what steps he was to ascend."

The successors of Shere Khan, until Humaioon with the aid of the king of Persia recovered his dominions in Hindostan, were Shere's second son, Selim*;

* Selim usurped the throne to the prejudice of his elder brother, Adil, who was overthrown in battle, and fled; but

Ferose; Mubarick, under the title of Mahommed VI.*; Ibrahim III.; Secunder Shah; and Mahmood; all omrahs of the Patan race.

To note the events of this period would be but a repetition nearly of former details. Suffice it to say, that war and devastation, perfidy of the most abandoned character, and murder, were its principal features. To such a height were faction and anarchy carried, that, in a dispute among the omrahs about the succession to the throne, one of them boldly asserted, in opposition to hereditary

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was never more heard of. Another act of this barbarian is recorded, that having some hundred Geekers in a prison at Gualioor, he ordered the whole to be blown up with gunpowder.

* Of Mubarick it is recorded, that when Ferose, a youth of twelve years old, mounted the throne, he had not reigned three days, when his uncle Mubarick assassinated him, and usurped the empire, under the title of Mahommed Adil (the just). "He perpetrated this barbarous deed with his own "hand, in the Mahl. The villain's own sister, Bibi Bai, de- "fended for some time her son in her arms, presenting her "body to the dagger. In vain did she entreat and weep— "the wretch was hardened against pity. He tore the young "prince from her arms, and in her presence severed his head "from his body. This was the return which he made to the "unfortunate Bibi Bai, for saving his life repeated times; "when Selim, foreseeing his villanies, would have put him to "death."—Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 278.

claims, "that the empire was no man's in-"heritance, but should always follow the for-"tune of the sword;" and so it occurred, that, at one time, no less than three emperors, supported by their respective armies (besides Humaioon), were proclaimed, and crowned.* Such, indeed, was the general anarchy and confusion throughout the country, as to render it impossible, as Ferishta observes, to continue the direct chain of its history.

Humaioon's first exertions for the recovery of his authority, were directed against Cabul and Candahar; which, with the aid of a Persian army, he subdued, after a long contest with his perfidious brother Cumiran, who was at length taken, his eyes put out, and suffered, in this state, to proceed on a pilgrimage to Mecca, where he died. Humaioon next possessed himself of the Punjaab; and finally of Delhi and Agra, when he was again restored to the imperial dignity, which now fell for ever from the Patans, and became finally fixed in the Moghul descendants of the great Timour. Humaioon, shortly after this event, died of a fall down stairs, at Delhi, in the year 1555.

* These three were Mahommed VI., Ibrahim III., and Secunder Shah, nephew of the emperor Shere.—Dow's Fer. vol. ii. p. 278 to 285.

His son Akbar succeeded him when only twelve years old. The reign of Akbar has been celebrated by Indian writers as the most prosperous and happy in the annals of the empire; and his character is given as the perfection almost of humanity. To his generosity, clemency, and personal valour, there were, it is said, no bounds; and Ferishta closes his account of the emperor by saying, that "the faults of Akbar were virtues carried "to extremes; and if he sometimes did things "beneath the dignity of a great king, he "never did any thing unworthy of a good "man. His name lives, and will for ever "live, the glory of the house of Timour; "and an example of renown to the kings of "the world." Of the truth of this picture, the reader will judge from the events of his reign. The fact is, that Akbar, like his grandfather Baber, was a great and successful warrior; with more clemency of disposition, and elevation of mind, than appertained, in the times alluded to, to any one of the Mogul or Patan races. But his reign, like those of his predecessors, was one incessant scene of warfare, insurrection, devastation, perfidy, and blood. At his accession two of the usurpers mentioned above, Mahomed and Secunder Shah, were in arms against him.

He had all the provinces of the empire to reconquer. No sooner was one rebellious viceroy subdued, than another started up in some other quarter; and as regularly as traitors were pardoned, and restored to favour, so did their appetites for fresh plots and conspiracies return, and as naturally, to all appearance, as the desire for their daily food.

The complete establishment of Akbar's authority in the beginning of his reign, was greatly owing to the superior talents and energy of his minister Byram, who had also successfully served the emperor Humaioon, and continued for many years the vizier of his son. But Byram was fully imbued with the spirit of the age. After the defeat of Himu, the minister of Mahommed, the Patan emperor, (see page 181), he was led captive, and severely wounded, into the presence of Akbar; when Byram proposed that the young emperor should have the honour of striking off the head of this "brave infidel" with his own hand. Himu had greatly distinguished himself as a warrior, and was proportionably esteemed. The young Akbar turned, with horror, from the proposition of his tutor and minister, whereupon Byram, exclaiming that the emperor's mistaken clemency would be his ruin, drew his sword, and, in the presence of his sovereign, severed the

captive's head from his body—an event which Ferishta simply records without further notice. Byram put several other persons of distinction to death, without the emperor's authority, or applying to him on the subject. Through intrigues and jealousies he was at length disgraced. He then rebelled, was defeated, taken, pardoned, allowed to proceed on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and finally murdered by Mubarick Lohani, on his way through Guzerat.*

As a proof of Akbar's moderation, it is recorded of him, that on his accession to the throne, he issued orders to prohibit the exaction of the usual present of money from the farmers; to let all goods pass toll-free; and to prevent the injurious practice of pressing labourers to the war. Being, however, constantly engaged against rebellious armies, whose chiefs carried with them, for security's sake, the treasures they had accumulated, he appears, on the defeat and subjugation of

* It is a curious example of the manners and spirit of the age, that the vizier, whom Akbar had appointed after the disgrace of Byram, should be murdered in the palace while quietly reading the Koran, by another Omrah, who bore him a grudge, on which the emperor himself was so enraged, that instead of delivering over the murderer to justice, he personally pursued him to a terrace, knocked him down with his fist, and ordered his attendants to throw him headlong over the parapet wall, forty yards in height.—Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 336.

these rebels, to have possessed himself of great wealth, numerous elephants, and other valuable effects. When these services, or the invasion of fresh countries, were performed by his generals, they frequently retained the plunder, to assert, in due time, their own independence; and only disgorged it when compelled to submit to the imperial arms. Many transactions of this nature are recorded in the reign of Akbar.

On the taking of Bijanagur in Malwa, his favourite tutor, Pier Mahommud, governor of Malwa, put all the garrison to the sword, because they obliged him to risk an assault; and at the subsequent taking of Brampoor, he ordered a cruel massacre of all the inhabitants, among whom were a number of philosophers, and learned men. That Akbar approved of these and other acts equally cruel must be inferred from Ferishta's notice of them as common, and therefore not censurable, occurrences; but they detract from the clemency which Akbar, on other occasions, displayed in pardoning individual Omrahs for offences against himself.

When the imperial arms were occupied in other quarters, Asaph, who had been appointed, by Akbar, governor of Kurrah and Manukpoor, attacked the neighbouring Hindoo kingdom of Garrah or Kuttack; which

had never yet fallen under the dominion of foreigners. It was 300 miles long, and 100 miles broad; with 70,000 towns, and villages, well inhabited. Asaph, after defeating the Hindoo army, headed by their heroic queen Dargetti, who was killed in the action, laid siege to Jora, where all the treasures of the royal family had been, for ten generations, deposited.* When the unfortunate garrison were reduced to extremity, they performed the horrid ceremony of the Joar,† or general massacre of their women and children. The riches of Jora, when taken by Asaph, in gold, silver, jewels, and precious effects, were invaluable. Of gold alone, there were found, in one treasury, 101 chests of mohurs.‡ Asaph, reserving this plunder to himself, and uniting with other rebels, the emperor marched against him with a large force, compelled him to submit, and to disgorge his ill-gotten wealth, which was accordingly transferred to the imperial exchequer. The other rebel chiefs, in this quarter, were also ultimately subdued, taken prisoners, and carried by the emperor to Jionpoor, where they were trodden to death by elephants.

Akbar, shortly afterwards, laid siege to the strong fort of Chitor, in Rajpootana, then

* Vide p. 251—253. † Vide p. 259.

‡ A gold mohur is sixteen rupees, or thirty-two shillings.

governed by a Hindoo prince, Jeimal.* The prince, being killed in defending a breach, the garrison gave themselves up to despair, and destroyed, according to custom, their wives and children by a Joar. Akbar led his men in person to the assault; and having introduced 300 elephants of war into the fort, he ordered them to advance on the desperate Rajaputs, and to tread them to death. "The "scene became now too shocking to be de- "scribed. Brave men, rendered more valiant "by despair, crowded around the elephants, "seized them by the tusks, and inflicted on "them unavailing wounds. The terrible ani- "mals trod the Indians like grass-hoppers "under their feet, or winding them in their "powerful trunks tossed them aloft into the "air, or dashed them against the walls and "pavements. Of the garrison, which con- "sisted of 8000 soldiers and 40,000 inhabi- "tants, 30,000 were slain, and most of the "rest taken prisoners."†

In Bengal, Zeman Khan and Bahadur Khan had established themselves in independant sovereignty. Akbar, with his usual

* Chitor is celebrated in Indian story for its strength and temples. It was consequently the depôt of all the wealth, or plunder, of the surrounding country. It was taken by Alla-ud-deen, emphatically called "the scourge of the Hindoos," in 1303—by Akbar in 1567—by Aurungzebe in 1680, and after him unmercifully plundered by the Mahrattas

† Dow's Fer. vol. ii. p. 357.

vigour, overthrew them in battle, and pursued their flying battalions "with prodigious slaughter." The chiefs were taken, and the punishment inflicted on them is a pretty clear indication of the civilization of the times, and of Akbar's notions of administering justice. One of them was strangled on the spot without any form of trial, and the other trampled to death.

Akbar about this time (1572) had mastered the whole of Malwa and Guzerat down to the city of Surat, which he took; relieving also these provinces, as it is said, "from their "petty tyrants who, like vultures, gnawed the "bowels of their country.*" His armies were afterwards incessantly employed to quell rebellious viceroys, and insurgent omrahs, in various parts of the empire; and Bengal, Lahore, Cashmire, Guzerat, and Malwa, were again exposed to the ravage and misery of war.

Throughout these transactions, Akbar had frequently turned the "eye of conquest" towards the Deccan, which, in 1593, he invaded in the true spirit of a robber. Mill terms this invasion "a project of unprovoked aggression, "and unprincipled ambition."—For several years, this country continued to be an uninterrupted scene of devastation and blood. Armies after armies were sent into the field on both

* From expressions like these, proceeding too from the pen of a native historian, no inference but one can be drawn as to the state of the inhabitants.

sides, each of which had alternately the victory. The conquered provinces were finally added to the imperial titles; so that the empire, at Akbar's death, in 1605, consisted of the following divisions: Kandahar, Ghizni, Cabul, Cashmire, Lahore, Moultan, Cutch, Sindi, Ajmere, Sirhind, Delhi, Dooab, Agra, Allahabad, Oude, Behar, Bengal, Orissa, Malwa, Berar, Chandeish, Guzerat; yielding a net revenue to the exchequer of thirty-two millions sterling, besides twenty millions, on an average, from presents, and the estates of deceased persons reverting to the crown.

These are some of the events which characterise the reign of Akbar. Ferishta's history of his favorite hero is one continued chain of military exploits. It is true that Akbar established a vast empire, the *summum bonum* of this life in the eyes of a Mussulman; but conspiracies, treasons, unprovoked aggression—"brute violence and proud tyran-"nic power"—are its most conspicuous features throughout. For particulars of these events, the reader is referred to the history itself—it would draw out this abstract into tedious length to detail them here.*

* One of Akbar's historians relates anecdotes of the close of his reign, which, though not mentioned by Ferishta, are given as ascertained facts; and, if so, may be considered truly descriptive of the manners and spirit of Asiatic courts. His eldest son Selim had, it is said, rebelled and raised a large force; but being prevailed on at length to throw himself at

Akbar had a favorite secretary, and very learned man, Abul Fazil, to whom we are indebted for what are called the Institutes of Akbar, containing a minute account of the emperor's dominions in the fortieth year of his reign; with the rules and regulations for its internal administration. In the spirit of an eastern courtier, Abul Fazil ascribes all the regulations of this code, and even the merit of new inventions, to the genius of his royal master. Many of them would have been useful improvements on the anarchical and oppressive rule of his predecessors, had means existed for giving them effect; but from the whole tenor of Akbar's eventful reign, it may safely be doubted, whether any thing more can be ascribed to the labours of Abul Fazil, than the merit of a literary production. Akbar, from natural disposition,

his father's feet, Akbar at first loaded him with invective, and struck him with great violence. Selim drew his sword, intending to plunge it in his own breast; but Akbar relenting, the son was pardoned, and restored to favour. Another anecdote is, that the emperor being offended with a powerful Omrah, invited him to a grand entertainment, intending to poison him. The poison, however, was administered to Akbar himself, and caused his death. This is the man who, the same historian says, ought to "be ranked in fame with the "greatest legislators and heroes of antiquity;" and of whom a long eulogium is given, quoted from Maurice's History of Hindostan, which casts into the shade all other "just" and "glorious" monarchs; and would leave them to blush for the little good they had rendered to mankind compared with this "bright exemplar to all the potentates of the earth."—Vide Enc. Lond. vol. x. p. 42—3.

may have had sincerely good intentions as to the government of his subjects; but it is scarcely possible that they could ever have been put, or at all events but partially put; into practice; for military glory was the ruling passion of his soul; his constant occupation; and the calamities of incessant warfare the unavoidable result.* The system of a Mahomedan despotism was in no respect altered under his sway; neither had his empire any other stability than what it derived from the vigour of his own arm. As far as his personal influence extended, his own will and caprice were the only law. In the Subahs, or vice-royalties, of the empire, Omrahs were appointed to govern, every one of whom, even to his own brother, Hakim, aspired to independence; and, as favorable opportunities offered,

* It is no proof of the civilization of the times, or of improvement in the internal administration of the country, that such a man as Abul Fazil, in the forty-eighth year of Akbar's reign, should be cut off by the hands of assassins. The learned historian was attacked by banditti, when on a journey from the Deccan to join his master at Agra, and basely murdered. Some writers ascribe the deed to the instigation of prince Selim, Akbar's son; but Ferishta denies this accusation, adding, that Abul Fazil with his retinue was attacked by a body of Rajaputs, merely to rob him of his wealth.—Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 398. Whoever the murderers were, they were not brought to punishment; neither is the fate of this distinguished man mentioned otherwise than as an ordinary occurrence of the times.

erected the standard of revolt. To such a pitch was the spirit of defection carried, that latterly he never allowed a Subahdar to remain more than three years at a time in his government. But this rule availed him little, for perfidy was, as it were, a second nature with these barbarians; and attended with no other discredit, in general estimation, than what arose from discomfiture and defeat. Success legitimated the most nefarious treachery—failure only was adjudged to be wrong.

It was owing, therefore, to the energy and personal bravery of Akbar's character, that he was enabled to uphold his authority, and extend the limits of his dominions. To controul a never-ending succession of fearless and licentious conspirators, it required of him to be the bravest of the throng. Many of his exploits were accordingly rash in the extreme; but admired and extolled by the fierce spirits of the age, to whom courage was the most dazzling of human virtues, and daring enterprise the more captivating, when set off with all the brilliancy of success.

Akbar's reign continued 50 years, and though many instances are adduced of his clemency to individuals, which no doubt was uncommon, considering the spirit of his contemporaries, and the race from which he

sprang, he cannot be considered free from the worst vices of Mahomedan despots. He stands personally charged with cruelty and assassination, together with the butchery by thousands at a time of the hapless Hindoos; for after the disgrace of his minister Byram, some of those acts are imputable to himself*, whilst others were perpetrated by his officers and generals, which, if he did not approve, he suffered at all events to pass unnoticed. Being a man of great enterprise and undaunted courage, he succeeded, as we have seen, in conquering all the revolted provinces of the empire, and extended his dominions to the southern parts of the Deccan; but the glory of his arms redounded in nothing to the benefit, the happiness, or the security of his people.

From the accumulations of wealth in the imperial treasuries, we read of vast sums being expended by Akbar on the construction and decoration of magnificent palaces, and other objects of personal grandeur; but, however much works of this kind may excite the admiration of the vulgar, they are a dead letter

* On one occasion he impaled alive Munsoor Shirazi, an omrah of the court, accused of correspondence with his enemies. The enemy in this case happened to be Hakim, the emperor's own brother, who set up the standard of rebellion in Punjaab. — Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 377.

as regards the promotion of permanent prosperity. The celebrated Ayeen Acbery is doubtless an extraordinary production for the time in which it appeared, and proves beyond dispute the ability of its learned author, Abul Fazil; but of this code of regulations it may be safely observed, that some of them are puerile, and indicative of the low state of civilization as well as depotism of the times; whilst some of the most important—especially as regards the revenue,—never were, because they never could be, carried into effect, as will be more fully illustrated hereafter. Whatever vigour or regularity, therefore, Akbar's mind may have infused into his own administration, it was not of that comprehensive character as to embrace the interests of futurity. The merit of his reign, whatever it might be, was confined to its own period—his regulations had no endurance beyond it—and the proof is, that his son and successor had, on Akbar's death, immediately to enter on the same scenes of contention for power, of civil war, anarchy, devastation, and blood, as constitute the characteristic features of every other reign.*

* Selim, alias Jehangire, had scarcely reigned six months, before his eldest son, Khosro, aided by two powerful Omrahs, rose in rebellion. Being overcome, and led captive into the imperial presence, Khosro was consigned to a dungeon, and

Ferishta's history closes with the reign of Akbar. To pursue that of succeeding emperors, would only be to repeat a mass of the same disgusting details. I shall only observe that, from this time, 1605 to 1747, the empire declined rapidly. The imperial throne descended through a line of Mogul princes, and through scenes of anarchy and treachery, only to be paralleled among Mahomedan despots. Selim succeeded his father Akbar; but after him, legitimacy and primogeniture gave way to the right of the sword. On no occasion did the rightful heir succeed to the throne; and only in one instance did the eldest son of the former prince succeed, and he held it but for 18 months.* The last of the series

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blinded, by order of his father, and afterwards murdered by one of his own brothers. Of the two Omrahs, one was sewn up in the raw hide of an ox, the other of an ass, and in this state of suffocation paraded through the streets for public shew. Three hundred more of the principal rebels were impaled alive; and Khosro, previous to his being blinded, marched through the writhing bodies.—Enc. Lon. vol. x. p. 43. These are some of the events which immediately followed the death of Akbar. It will hence be perceived, that, in spite of all that has been said of Akbar's own government, the Mussulman system itself underwent no reform or beneficial change. It was, on the contrary, continued through every succeeding reign, in all its former violence and atrocity.

* Selim was proclaimed under the title of Jehangire, and reigned twenty-two years and three quarters.

in this period was Mahommed Shah, who ascended the throne in 1718; and died, after a most disastrous reign of thirty years, in 1747.

Of these princes, it would probably be deemed an omission were I to say nothing of the celebrated Aurungzebe, who has been so highly eulogized among Indian writers for his justice, clemency, learning, and various other virtues.*

His third son succeeded, under the title of Shah Jehan, and reigned thirty-two years.

Shah Jehan was deposed by his third son, the famous Aurungzebe, who reigned forty-nine years.

Bahadur Shah the next emperor, was Aurungzebe's second son, and died after a short reign of five years.

Jehandar Shah was the preceding emperor's eldest son, and reigned eighteen months.

His brother Ferocksere succeeded and reigned six years. He was blinded, and afterwards put to death by two Seids, Abdalla and Hassan, who tyrannised in the empire about this time, raising and deposing kings at pleasure.

Ruffeich ul Dirjat, a grandson of Bahadar Shah, was next raised to the dignity by the Seids; but murdered by them after a nominal reign of three months.

His brother Ruffeih ul Dowlat was next proclaimed, but died or was killed in a few days.

Mahommed was the son of Jehan and grandson of Bahadur Shah, who contrived to rid himself of the tyrannizing Seids.

* The fallacy of these representations in Indian writers has not escaped the judgment and sagacity of the profound Mill. Shah Jehan, the father of Aurungzebe, is also greatly lauded for his strict justice, &c. on which Mill has the following remark. "We meet with boasts in the oriental historians, of kings whose "administration of justice was so perfect, that a purse of gold

His reign, however, when fairly scrutinized, has nothing to distinguish its character or its principles from those of the common herd of Patan and Moghul sovereigns. He fought his way to the throne of Delhi, which he mounted, in August 1658, on the imprisonment of his father, and ultimately secured by the destruction of his three brothers, one of his own sons Mahommed, and his nephew Soliman. Vigour and talent distinguished his career; but it was also marked by perfidy, consummate hypocrisy, and religious bigotry. The detail of his transactions is, as usual, a series of military exploits. Aspiring to the throne during his father's lifetime, his elder brother, Dara, raised an army in Guzerat

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" might be exposed on the highways, and no man would touch " it. Never was justice better administered in India than under " the reign of Shah Jehan; yet knowing more of the circum- " stances of his reign, we know better what the general eulo- " gies of the oriental historians mean. Bernier, describing " his situation at the time of his arrival at the court of Shah " Jehan, speaks of le peu d'argent qui me restoit de diverses " rencontres de voleurs," vol. i. p. 565. According to Dow, this " just" monarch, to secure his own seat on the throne of Delhi, murdered his own nearest relatives, brothers, nephews, and cousins, by wholesale. " The emperor, either by the dagger " or bow-string, dispatched all the males of the house of Timour, " so that he himself, and his children, only remained of the pos- " terity of Baber."—Dow, vol. iii. p. 117. So much for imperial justice and clemency in oriental despots.

to oppose him. After employing his usual engines of treachery and deceit, he gained a complete victory. Dara fled, was treacherously seized, and delivered over to Aurungzebe. "His murder was only a few days "deferred, during which he was ignominiously "exposed about the streets of Delhi." His second brother Suja, was Subahdar of Bengal, from whence, after protracted hostility, he was driven by the imperial troops into Arracan, where he and his family were cruelly murdered. His younger brother Morad, whom he had deceived with expectations of the imperial dignity, his own son Mahomed, and his nephew Soliman, were incarcerated, and terminated their days in the state prisons of Gualior.†

Apprehensive of the great talents of Emir Jumla, who had been instrumental in his elevation to the throne, and whose services he had rewarded with the viceroyalty of Bengal, Aurungzebe encouraged the Emir to invade Assam. He did so with success; but after his return to Bengal fell a victim to dis-

* On the war between the sons of Shah Jehan, Mill observes; "To every brother under an oriental despotism, the sons of the "reigning monarch look as either a victim or a butcher, and "see but one choice between the musnud and the grave."—Vol. i. p. 567.

ease, on which the emperor observed to Emir Jumla's son, "You have lost a father, and I have lost the greatest and most dangerous of my friends." Aurungzebe had now attained, for a time at least, that point which oriental despots deem their only safety, viz.: when there shall not be a man alive whose power or influence they may have cause to dread.

A rebellion in Guzerat is next mentioned, and then a war with the Raja of Arracan, who had procured the aid of Portuguese settlers in Chittagong to seize that and other provinces along the coast.

A war with Persia next occupied the arms of Aurungzebe; but Shah Abbas, the king of Persia dying, an accommodation ensued which enabled Aurungzebe to turn his attention to the Deccan.

He had however abundant occupation in other quarters, for in 1673 and 1674 we find him engaged in a serious war with the Patans or Afghans in his northern provinces; in which the latter were at length driven to the mountains. After its close the governor of Peshawur insinuated himself into the confidence of the Afghan chiefs, and at an entertainment given to them murdered the whole with their attendants.

In 1681 to 1687 he carried war into the

heart of the Rajepoot states, proposing, under the mask of religion, to execute a project for forcibly converting the Hindoos to the faith of Mahommed, in which the usual atrocities were practised.

Towards the close of his reign he had to oppose the rising sect of the Seiks in Punjaab, and in the prosecution of this war the most barbarous cruelties were committed on both sides.

But previous to Aurungzebe's elevation to the throne of Delhi, he held, under his father, the viceroyalty of the Deccan; at which time and throughout the whole of his long and stormy reign, this country was a scene of incessant warfare and opposition to the imperial arms. In 1687 Aurungzebe again entered it at the head of a large force, and subdued the Mussulman kingdoms of Golconda and Beejapoor; but the Mahrattas were still enabled to lay waste the country with fire and sword; to give constant employment to the imperial arms; and likewise to encrease their own power and strength. During the course of these transactions, one of his sons, Sultan Akbar having incurred his father's displeasure, made his escape to Persia; the other, Mahomed Mauzim, alias Shah Allum, was

seized and confined for remonstrating against an act of treachery by his father towards the king of Golconda.

Of the condition of the people throughout this celebrated reign, there is little to be found in history to satisfy enquiry beyond a few incidents related as occurrences of the period. The ravages of hostile armies are admitted to have been constant and excessive; and the officers of government to have enriched themselves by insatiate plunder of the people. A famine raged at one time with all the horrors usually attending such a calamity. An occurrence is also related, which would be ludicrous, but for the proof it affords of the ignorance and superstition of the age. A body of 20,000 Fakirs or religious mendicants, after committing devastations in the country with impunity, and fancying themselves invincible, actually marched to Delhi with an old woman, supposed to be a magician, at their head; defeated a body of imperial troops, and proclaimed the old woman sovereign. They were at length put down by Aurungzebe, pretending to superior enchantment, and furnishing his troops with a charm, under the influence of which the witchcraft of the old magician was broken, and the whole body of Fakirs was put to the sword.

We are likewise informed, that during this reign " an odious religious capitation tax " was imposed on the mild and inoffensive " Hindoos, and levied with the utmost rigour. " Their sufferings at length exceeded their " patience; they resisted, and were over- " powered and disarmed. They were now " abandoned a prey to every body of plun- " derers: cultivation ceased, as they tilled " but a sufficiency for their own consump- " tion; and a famine ensued with all its con- " comitant evils. Such had been the *result* " *of the government of one of the wisest empe-* " *rors.*" Waring's Hist. Mahr. p. 93.

Aurungzebe died in February 1707. A reign of forty-nine years was thus passed in scenes of perfidy, hypocrisy, and military violence. Not a thought or project—not a law or regulation—for the comfort and benefit of his people is any where mentioned. The principle of this, as of every other reign, seems to have been the constitutional doctrine of the East, that kings are made to keep the world in awe, and that all living creatures are equally the slaves of royalty;* consequently only fit to be considered, or used, as ministering to the ambition or the pleasures

* Vide p. 229.

of their sovereign lord. Almost all that we know from history of the people is to be drawn by inference from the acts of their rulers, and a few occasional remarks on passing events. When, therefore, we are informed, shortly after the death of Aurungzebe, that the disorders of the country continued—that "the Zemindars aimed at inde-
" pendance, and that the people either be-
" came robbers or suffered from bands of
" robbers, who plundered the country with
" impunity;" we are left from this and other occurrences abovementioned to form our own conclusions (no difficult task it may be said) of the true character and state of the times.

But of Aurungzebe's rapacious and oppressive administration we have an authentic account, (though not recorded in the history of the period) in a letter addressed to him by a contemporary, the Raja Jesswunt Sing. The elegance of this production will probably excuse me with the reader for its insertion here—not only as a confirmation of the fact contended for—but to shew also, what it is the main object of this publication to shew, that the minds of native Indians are abundantly imbued with principles and with powers that would do no small honour to the wisest of mankind.

After adverting, in the Eastern style, to the glories of Aurungzebe's ancestors, Jeswunt Sing proceeds :—" Such were the benevolent " inclinations of your ancestors. Whilst they " pursued these great and generous principles, " wheresoever they directed their steps, con- " quest and prosperity went before them ; and " then they reduced many countries and for- " tresses to their obedience. During your " majesty's reign many have been alienated " from the empire, and farther loss of terri- " tory must necessarily follow, since devasta- " tion and rapine now universally prevail " without restraint. Your subjects are tram- " pled under foot, and every province of " your empire is impoverished; depopulation " spreads and difficulties accumulate. When " indigence has reached the habitation of the " sovereign and his princes, what can be the " condition of the nobles? As to the soldiery, " they are in murmurs ; the merchants com- " plaining, the Mahommedans discontented, " the Hindoos destitute, and multitudes of " people wretched even to the want of their " nightly meal, are beating their heads " throughout the day in desperation.

" How can the dignity of the sovereign be " preserved who employs his power in exact- " ing heavy tributes from a people thus miser-

" ably reduced? At this juncture it is told
" from east to west, that the emperor of Hin-
" dostan, jealous of the poor Hindoo devotee,
" will exact a tribute from Brahmans, Sano-
" rahs, Joghies, Beraughies, Sonassees; that,
" regardless of the illustrious honour of his
" Timurean race, he condescends to exercise
" his power over the solitary inoffensive an-
" choret. If your majesty places any faith in
" those books, by distinction called divine,
" you will there be instructed, that God is
" the God of all mankind, not the God of
" Mahommedans alone. The Pagan and the
" Mussulman are equally in his presence.
" Distinctions of colour are of his ordination.
" It is he who gives existence. In your
" temples, to his name the voice is raised in
" prayer; in a house of images, where the
" bell is shaken, still he is the object of ado-
" ration. To vilify the religion or customs of
" other men, is to set at nought the pleasure
" of the Almighty. When we deface a pic-
" ture, we naturally incur the resentment of
" the painter; and justly has the poet said,
" ' Presume not to arraign or scrutinize the
" ' various works of power divine.'

" In fine, the tribute you demand from the
" Hindoos is repugnant to justice; it is
" equally foreign from good policy, as it must

" impoverish the country; moreover, it is an " innovation and an infringement of the laws " of Hindostan. But if zeal for your own " religion hath induced you to determine " upon the measure, the demand ought, by " the rules of equity, to have been made first " upon Ramsing, who is esteemed the princi- " pal among the Hindoos; then let your well- " wisher be called upon, with whom you will " have less difficulty to encounter; but, to tor- " ment ants and flies, is unworthy of an heroic " or generous mind. It is wonderful that the " ministers of your government should have " neglected to instruct your majesty in the " rules of rectitude and honour." (Vide As. An. Reg. M. Tracts, p. 105.)

Of the Raja Jesswunt Sing it is important to observe, that he was one of Aurungzebe's best, favorite, and most faithful generals. When he died, Aurungzebe ordered his children to be forcibly converted to Mahomedanism. In defending them, most of their Rajpoot attendants perished. He then expelled the family from the fort of Joudpoor, and compelled them to take refuge in the hills and woods. — Such was the mode in which the "just" and "clement" Aurungzebe rewarded the family of one of his ablest and most devoted servants. Ham. Acc. Joudpoor, p. 454.

We must now return to the reign of Mahommed Shah, which is most remarkable for the dreadful invasion of Nadir Shah, in 1738-9; an irruption still more terrific, if possible, than that of Timour Beg; it being, moreover, stamped with the infamy of having been invited and encouraged by traitorous Omrahs at the court of Delhi, to promote their own wicked views of personal aggrandizement.

Nadir Shah entered Hindostan at the head of a large force, and having subdued Kandahar, Cabul, and the Punjaab, with the usual ravages and devastations of a Mussulman army,* marched direct to Delhi. The emperor, Mahommed, and his minister or commander-in-chief, Dowran, were now roused from the security into which they had been lulled by the artifices of the treacherous Omrahs; and Dowran marched out, at the head of a numerous force, to oppose the Persians. He was defeated in the action, through the treachery of the two principal conspirators, Sadet and Nizam ul Mulk, and mortally

* Nadir Shah found in the treasury of Cabul alone £2,500,000 in specie; and effects to the value of £2,000,000 more. In these were included 4000 complete sets of armour, inlaid with gold; 4000 of polished steel; 4000 mails for horses; and a great quantity of fine tissues and dresses.—Dow's Fer. vol. ii. p. 415.

wounded. Nadir Shah's army suffered severely in this action; but after some further intrigues, and perfidies, he contrived to possess himself of the capital, closed the gates to prevent the inhabitants from carrying away their wealth, and demanded of them twenty-five crores of rupees, or thirty millions sterling, as a ransom for sparing the city. All communication with the country, and consequently all supplies, being cut off, a famine first raged in the city; then a tumult, in which thousands, on both sides, were slaughtered, and every street in Delhi became a scene of confusion and death. Nadir Shah, having an officer killed by his side, was so enraged, that he ordered a general massacre, and in a few hours above 100,000 persons, without distinction of age, sex, or condition, lay dead in their blood. "The "Hindoos, according to their barbarous cus- "tom, shut up their wives and daughters, set "fire to their apartments, and then threw "themselves into the flames. Thousands "plunged headlong into wells, and were "drowned. Death was seen in every horrid "shape, and at last seemed rather to be "sought after than avoided."* At the en-

* Dow's Fer. vol. ii. 428.

treaty of the emperor Mahommed, this dreadful scene of destruction was at length stayed; but Nadir Shah's thirst of blood was not satisfied. He sent detachments daily into the surrounding villages to put all the inhabitants to the sword. And, as a proof of the sense entertained by a Mussulman despot of justice in punishment, another party was detached, after the massacre, into the royal market, where the tumult first arose, and 700 persons being seized indiscriminately, their noses and ears were cut off. After this, the city was given up to pillage, in which many of the Omrahs were beheaded, tortured, or otherwise cruelly used. Nadir Shah himself "seized "upon the public treasure, and the regalia "of the Mogul emperor. In the treasury, "several vaults were discovered, in which "much wealth lay concealed, as well as "many valuable effects. In the public trea-"sury was found in specie four millions sterl-"ing—in the private vaults two millions and "a half. The jewel office was estimated at "thirty millions, including the famous throne "of the Mogul emperors, which was valued "at more than twelve millions. The royal "wardrobe and armory were reckoned worth "seven millions. Eight millions were raised "in specie, by way of contribution, on the

" city; and ten millions in jewels; all which, " with horses, camels, and elephants, amount " to about £62,500,000 sterling."* In 1739, Nadir Shah† returned to Persia, having reinstated Mahommed on the throne of Hindostan, after a formal cession to the crown of Persia, of the provinces of Cabul, Peshawer, Kandahar, Ghizni, Moultan, and Sind. The whole treasure, which Nadir Shah carried from Hindostan on his return to his own dominions, amounted, it is said, by the best computation, to eighty millions of our money.‡

We thus see how the wealth of India, after extortion from the oppressed inhabitants, was first amassed and hoarded by despots for their own strength and protection, and afterwards became the spoil of a fellow-tyrant, or conspirator, who needed no other justification than the power, or the art, to seize it. In the Subahs, or viceroyalties of the empire, the same system, and the same practices, pre-

* Dow's Fer. vol. ii. p. 429.

† Nadir Shah was originally the son of a shepherd of Chorasan who, by the sale of his father's flocks, hired banditti, plundered the country, and ultimately raised himself to the throne of Persia. His career was one of dreadful cruelties, and terminated in his being massacred in his tent near Meshed, in June 1747.—Mill. i. p. 614.

‡ Dow's Fer. i. 431.

vailed. The will of a rapacious tyrant was the law universal; uncontrouled in its exercise, except where a stronger arm was uplifted to oppose its violence; and the mass of the people thereby plunged into the lowest depths of oppression and poverty.

The circumstances of this invasion may be quoted as a fair specimen of the manners, habits, and occurrences of the times; and, as proof of the utter impossibility for moral improvement, nay, for any thing but the lowest degradation of character, to exist among a people subject to the rule of such unprincipled and rapacious despots. One of the intrigues attending it is, in the same view, deserving of notice. Nizam ul Mulk was soubahdar, or viceroy of the Deccan, where he had established an independent government in reality, though still nominally subject to the crown of Delhi. Being summoned to court, he delayed going, until, by intrigue, he had effectually provided for his personal safety; and he then proceeded to Delhi, accompanied by an army of 20,000 men. His object was to supplant the captain general, Douran, who had the ear of the emperor; and, for this purpose, he joined the faction of the vizier, Kummir. Another omrah, Sadit Khan, soubahdar of Oude, also aspired to the ministerial

office; but, finding he could do nothing against the faction of the Nizam and Kummir, was easily persuaded to join them; each conspirator hoping, after the fall of Douran, to be able to outwit, or to subdue, his brethren in iniquity. Douran, having the sole command of the army, was however still too powerful for the faction; and, to accomplish their purpose, they invited Nadir Shah to invade Hindostan, hoping that the consequent distractions of the empire would enable them at least to establish a complete independence in their own respective governments, whilst the Nizam aspired, it is said, to the empire itself, expecting to hold it as a viceroyalty under Nadir Shah. The consequences of this intrigue, as regards the empire, have been already mentioned. In the battle before Delhi, Sadit Khan joined the Persian army. Douran being wounded in the arm, of which he afterwards died, was supposed to have had the wound poisoned by the secret instigation of the Nizam. On the death of Douran, the Nizam engrossed the whole power of the court, and entered into a treaty with Nadir Shah (whose army had been nearly defeated in the late action) to evacuate Hindostan for the pitiful sum of about £625,000 of our money. Sadit, hear-

ing of this treaty, offered Nadir Shah £2,500,000, on condition of his being placed at the head of the administration. Nadir Shah, who cared as little about treaties as the conspirators themselves, easily found means to evade his plighted faith to the Nizam; who was also persuaded to visit the Persian monarch in his own camp; where he was immediately seized and confined.

After the pillage and massacre of Delhi, Nadir Shah's power was so well established as to leave him nothing to dread from the intrigues of the court. Calling the Nizam and and Sadit to his presence, he addressed them as follows in full Durbar:—"Are not you "both most ungrateful villains to your king "and country, who, after possessing such "wealth and dignities, called me from my "own dominions to ruin them and your- "selves? But I will scourge you both "with all my wrath, which is the instru- "ment of the vengeance of God."* He then spit on their beards, the greatest affront that can be offered to a Mussulman, and turned them out of his presence with every

* It is curious to remark of one of these intriguing sinners, that the title assumed by him, viz. Nizam ul Mulk, means, being interpreted, "Composer of the State."

mark of indignity. The traitors, being thus ignominiously treated and disgraced, swore to each other, by the holy prophet, that they would not survive the indignity, and resolved to take poison on returning home. Sadit having no confidence in the Nizam's oath, sent a spy to watch his proceedings; but the crafty Nizam instructed a trusty servant to bring him an innocent draught, which the servant did with apparent reluctance. The Nizam, after formally saying his prayers, drank it off in the presence of the spy, and shortly after pretended to fall down dead. Sadit, on receiving this intelligence, unwilling to be outdone by his fellow in iniquity, swallowed real poison, and died. The Nizam was not ashamed even to pride himself on the wicked trick, by which he had got rid of a rival. He afterwards enjoyed the fruits of his villanies, in the unrivalled possession of power, although Nadir Shah, on taking leave of the emperor of Hindostan, cautioned him against this perfidious minister, saying, "Had not I passed my word for his safety, "the old traitor should not live to disturb "Mahommed."

It may be added of this conspiracy, that some time previous to its occurrence the emperor, who hated and feared the great power of Ni-

zam ul Mulk, had instigated the governor of Hyderabad to assassinate him; but the governor lost his life in the attempt. Whether the Nizam therefore was actuated on the occasion by views of personal agrandizement, or by revenge for the treacherous attempt on his life, or by both, is of little consequence. The story is equally illustrative of the manners and spirit of Mussulman rulers, and of the doom to which the subjects of such lawless sway must necessarily be fated.

When the king of Persia evacuated India, nothing remained to oppose the elevation of the Nizam, who consequently assumed all but the name of emperor; but after the late transactions at Delhi, the debility and disorganization of the empire were such as to leave to the indolent monarch, who still occupied the throne, the shadow only of imperial sway. The viceroyalties became everywhere independent; whilst the local struggles for ascendancy and power not only exposed them to hostility from without, but rendered each a scene of perpetual domestic convulsion.*

* In the Carnatic, for example, during Nizam ul Mulk's stay at Delhi, such was the anarchy and confusion, that no less than twenty petty chiefs had assumed the title of Nabob. His second son, Nazir Jung, whom he had left his

In consequence of the weakness and distractions of this reign, the Mahrattas, roused by the oppressions of their Mussulman conquerors, had risen into great importance. Their armies carried fire and sword to the very gates of Delhi, and extorted from the emperor Mahomed an engagement to pay them the *chout*, or fourth part of the revenues; and in 1741, a commission to raise it themselves on the revolted provinces.*

Mahommed died in 1747, from which time, till 1764, the throne of Delhi was nominally occupied by Mogul princes of the house of Timour; for continued anarchy, complicated treachery, murder, devastation, and pillage, pervading every part of the empire, its successive chiefs still inherited but the titles, and none of the substance, of imperial power. In this time, the Mahrattas established several independent and powerful sovereignties in the central parts of India, extending quite across

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deputy in the Deccan, also aspired at independence, so that on his return to the Deccan he had to reconquer his own possessions, which are stated to have been "so feebly and irregularly governed as to be overrun by innumerable disorders."

* The reader will see on pages 236—238, how this commission was executed, and its consequences to the inhabitants on whom the chout was levied.

the peninsula, from the bay of Bengal, to the gulph of Cambay. The Jaats, or Jates, a numerous tribe of Hindoos, under Sourage Mull, possessed a large territory near Agra. The Rohillas, headed by a military adventurer, threw off the imperial yoke, and occupied Budaoon, and the provinces north-east of Delhi. The Seiks in the Punjaab, the Soubahdars of Oude, Bengal, Behar, and Orissa; of the Deccan, Guzerat, Carnatic, &c. became also permanently independent; whilst Achmet Abdalla the Durannee, another military adventurer, formerly a *chobdar*, or mace-bearer, in the train of Nadir Shah, raised himself, after the assassination of the Persian monarch, to the sovereignty of all the countries which had been ceded to Persia to the north-west of the Indus, and which formerly composed the great monarchy of Ghizni. From thence he made frequent irruptions into Hindostan. In 1757 he penetrated to Delhi, entered the city, and levied a contribution on the inhabitants of a crore of rupees, a sum now more difficult to raise than ten crores in the days of Nadir Shah. His ravages, and those of the most dreadful nature,* extended

* Among other cruelties, after taking Muttra by assault, "he "sacked the place, and put the inhabitants to the sword for the

throughout the country of the Jates, when the affairs of his own empire required his return.

But in 1759, Abdalla again turned his eyes towards Hindostan, and in 1761 possessed himself of its devoted capital. "He laid the "city under heavy contributions, and en- "forced the collection with such rigour and "cruelty, that the unfortunate inhabitants, "driven to despair, took up arms. The Per- "sian ordered a general massacre, which, with- "out intermission, lasted seven days. The "relentless Durannees* were not even then "glutted with slaughter; but the stench of "the dead bodies drove them out of the city. "A great part of the buildings were, at the "same time, reduced to ashes; and many "thousands, who had escaped the sword, "suffered a lingering death by famine, sitting "upon the smoking ruins of their own houses. "Thus the imperial city of Delhi, which, in "the days of its glory, extended seventeen "crores† in length, and was said to contain

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"enormous crime of attempting to defend their lives and pro- "perty."—Dow, vol. ii. p. 468.

* The tribe of which Abdalla is chief are distinguished by that name.

† One crore is equal to about two miles.

" two millions of people, became almost a " heap of rubbish." *

But this was not all; for the Mahrattas had now marched towards Delhi, to oppose Abdalla with an army of 200,000 horse. On their approach, Abdalla evacuated the city; which "the Mahrattas immediately entered, " and filled every quarter of it with devastation " and death. Not content with robbing the " miserable remains of Abdalla's cruelty of " every thing they possessed, they stripped " all the males and females naked, and wan- " tonly whipped them along the streets. " Many now prayed for death as the greatest " blessing; and thanked the hand which in- " flicted the wound. Famine began to rage " among the unfortunate citizens to such a " degree, that men fled from their dearest " friends as from beasts of prey, for fear of " being devoured. Many women devoured " their own children; while some mothers " of more humanity were seen dead in the " streets, with infants still sucking at their " breasts."‡

Abdalla, having defeated the Mahrattas in a pitched battle, returned to his dominions; leaving affairs at Delhi to be conducted in

* Dow, vol. ii. p. 475. ‡ Ibid. p. 477.

the name of Jewan Bucht, the eldest son of the rightful emperor Shah Allum, under the tuition of Nujib al Dowla, the chief or prince of the Patan Rohillas. In the mean time, Shah Allum, who feared to trust himself in the hands of Abdalla, after wandering a fugitive throughout the empire, fell into the hands of the British, on their defeating the soubahdar of Oude, Suja al Dowla, at Buxar, in 1764. On this occasion, the British government settled the emperor at Allahabad, with a small district around it, yielding about twelve lacs of rupees in annual revenues; to which were added twenty-six lacs of rupees from Bengal. In 1772 we find Shah Allum a prisoner in the hands of the Mahrattas, who through mockery restored him to the throne of Delhi, in order, as would appear, to obtain for themselves various grants of territory under the imperial seal. In 1803, he again fell into the hands of the English, and his son Acbar Shah now resides at Delhi, with the name and title of emperor, and a revenue from the company of fifteen lacs of rupees per annum. Acbar Shah is said to be between 60 and 70 years of age. He still affects, as far as his means admit, the pageantry and ceremonials of imperial state; but alas! it is but the wreck of fallen great-

ness—the poor remains of that wealth and splendour which were once the pride of the Mogul throne.

Meanwhile affairs at Delhi became more than ever distracted. The poverty of the imperial treasury was only a prelude to the further misery and plunder of the helpless inhabitants. After the evacuation of the imperial provinces by Abdalla, the vizier became more cruel and oppressive than ever. The poor were tortured; the estates of the omrahs confiscated; the most false and frivolous pretences were raised to extort money, without which the army could not be supported, nor the authority of the minister enforced; nor his own natural cruelty and avidity gratified. But these practices were not confined to Delhi, and its immediate dependencies. Every portion of the declining empire was a scene of the like horrors. Its miserable state cannot be more forcibly described, than in the words of the author, who informs us, that, after the independence of the different Soubahs, and their dismemberment from the house of Timour, "each petty chief, by coun-
" terfeiting grants from Delhi, laid his claim
" to Jageers and to districts — the country
" was torn to pieces with civil wars, and
" groaned under every species of domestic

" confusion. Villany was practised in every " form; all law and religion were trodden " under foot; the bonds of private friendship " and connexions, as well as of society and " government, were broken; and every in- " dividual, as if amidst a forest of wild beasts, " could rely upon nothing but the strength of " his own arm." *

The details hitherto given, refer chiefly to that part of the Mahomedan empire included under the denomination of Hindostan, with part only of the Deccan. In the latter division of India, a Mussulman power seems to have shaken off its dependence upon Delhi, from about the middle of the fourteenth century, and to have established what may be called a second empire in the south, of which Colburga † was the capital. It was founded on the conquest and possession of all the countries subject to the rajas or kings of Bedur and Warangol or Arunkil, and included the whole of Telingana, and the provinces as far south as the river Kristna. This empire continued till about the year 1526, when it was parcelled into five monarchies; four of which combined to attack the Hindoo empire of Vijeyanuggur or Beejanuggur; ex-

* Dow, vol. ii. p. 461.

† Lying nearly west of Hyderabad.

tending over almost the whole of the south of India, from the Kristna and Tamboodra to Cape Comorin. Its capital was taken by the Mussulmans, after the decisive battle of Tellicotta, in 1564; and is said to have been plundered with the most shocking circumstances of cruelty and excess.

Of the five Mussulman monarchs, two, viz.:—the kings of Golconda and Beejapoor agreed, after the capture of Vijeyanuggur, to extend their conquests in separate directions; so as not to interfere with each other. The former accordingly carried his arms into Berar, whilst the king of Beejapoor extended his dominions to the south, into Canara, Mysoor, and Baramahl; the Naiks, or Rajahs of Tanjore and Madura being also his acknowledged vassals. These powerful kingdoms were partially brought under subjection to the throne of Delhi by the vigor of Acbar; and more completely subdued by the celebrated Aurungzebe, or Alumguire; who, during his father's life, was nominated, as we have already seen, to the viceroyalty of the Deccan. He resided for some time at Aurungabad, where the remains of his wealth and grandeur are still visible, though for the most part a mass of splendid ruins.

Throughout the whole period of the Maho-

medan ascendancy in the south, the same enormities, the never-failing accompaniments of their presence and power, are recorded to have been uniformly and unceasingly perpetrated, as have been already described, in the northern provinces. To review the occurrences of this period would only be to give further examples of the same unprovoked and devastating warfare; the same struggles for power; the same unbridled thirst of conquest; the same perfidy, treason, and private assassination; the same disregard of every tie, whether of nature, of honesty, or of honour; and the same persecution, oppression, and massacre of the Hindoos. The scenes, indeed, of butchery and blood are often mentioned as too horrid to relate—thousands—twenty—seventy—a hundred thousand souls, being sacrificed at a time, without the least remorse. Of one of these southern monsters, Mahomed, son of Alla ud deen, who died in 1374, it is recorded, and the trait may be received as characteristic of the fraternity, that he died acknowledging "all is vanity;" after the gratification, during his life, "of every sensual pas-
" sion, the slaughter of 500,000 persons, and
" the ruin and depopulation of the Carnatic."
The treasuries of these southern princes were also filled from the enormous plunder of their

defenceless subjects;* and the system of Mahomedan exaction, sometimes under the name of contribution, but permanently under that of revenue, being every where the same, with the power of rapacious armies every where to enforce it; the fate of the unhappy people was here, as in the north, stamped with the same wretchedness. There was no security for person or property. The latter, more especially, was always a fair object of seizure, wherever it was known to exist; and the mass of the people were thus reduced to a state of poverty, from which there was no escape; and of violence and oppression, against which there was no redress.

During the reign of Aurungzebe, the Hindoos, in the south of India, rose into great power, and at length effected the complete overthrow of the house of Timour in Hindostan. The modern Hindoo governments established over India, rose therefore on the ruins of the empire; the Mahomedans having been reduced to the kingdoms of

* Among other instances, it is related that "when the strong "fortress of Asere, in the Deccan, surrendered to Akbar, an "immense treasure, which had been accumulated there for "many ages, fell into his hands, with all the wealth of Amednagur." — Dow's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 397.

Oude and Bengal in the north; and of the Nizam, the Carnatic, and latterly of Mysoor in the south, with some other petty principalities. With the histories of these governments English readers are more familiar; and therefore, as regards the subject before us, it will only be necessary, previous to an account of the most extensive and powerful among them, to notice the character by which they were all, without exception, distinguished; and the effects thereby produced on the condition of the people.

All the accounts we possess of the Hindoo governments of India, prove them to have ever been, as they are now, in principle and practical operation, pure depotisms. In no respect do they differ from the Mahomedan, except that conquest has not been an object with the Hindoos for the purposes of conversion, or of fanatical persecution of the vanquished; but, barring this degree of ferocity, peculiar to the disciples of the Koran, a Hindoo government bears as full and distinct a stamp of covetousness, and rapacity, of the love of power, and disregard of the means of acquiring it, as any of the Mahomedan states. Colonel Wilkes is of opinion, that the undeviating despotisms of India, Mahomedan and Hindoo, are to be ascribed

to the union in both sects, of their respective religious and political codes; both of which enjoin the monarchical as the only form of government, and inculcate the doctrine, that royal authority is an emanation of the divine power; whilst the perpetual revolutions, civil commotions, and the spirit of conquest, which have uniformly marked these states, are mainly owing to precepts contained in the same codes, which the followers of each equally believe to be of divine authority.

In both codes, it is true that primogeniture is disregarded. According to the Hindoo system, sons are all coheirs; a faint distinction is admitted in favour of the eldest, provided he be worthy; whence Jagganatha, the commentator on Hindoo law, pronounces that "kingdoms may or may not be divided; "and that merit, not primogeniture, ought to "determine the succession."*

* The following are passages from the laws or ordinances of Menu, as translated by Sir William Jones; not only sanctioning, but inciting kings to incessant conquest.

100. "This is the fourfold rule, which he (the king) must "consider as the sure means of attaining the great object of "man's happiness; and let him practise it fully without in- "termission, without indolence.

101. "What he (the king) has not gained, let him strive "to gain by military strength; what he has acquired, let

The Koran, again, expressly declares that " the sword is his who can use it; and do-

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" him preserve by careful inspection; what he has pre-
" served, let him augment by legal means of increase; and
" what he augments, let him dispense with just liberality.

102. " Let his troops be constantly exercised; his prowess
" constantly displayed; what he ought to secure, constantly
" secured; and the weakness of his foe constantly investi-
" gated.

103. " By a king, whose forces are constantly ready for
" action, the whole world may be kept in awe: let him, then,
" by a force always ready, make all creatures living his own.

105. " Let not his enemy discern his vulnerable part; but
" the vulnerable part of his enemy let him well discern.

106. " Like a heron let him muse on gaining advantages;
" like a lion let him put forth his strength; like a wolf let
" him creep towards his prey; like a hare let him double to
" secure his retreat.

107. " When he thus has prepared himself for conquest,
" let him reduce all opposers to submission, by negotiation
" and three other expedients, viz.: presents, division, and
" force of arms.

108. " If they cannot be restrained by the three first
" methods, then let him firmly but gradually bring them to
" subjection, by military force.

109. " Among those four modes of obtaining success, the
" wise prefer negociation and war for the exaltation of king-
" doms.

197. " Let him secretly bring over to his party all such
" leaders as he can safely bring over; let him be informed

" minion for him who conquers." That these laws and injunctions have had their effect in promoting the never-varying despotisms of the East, there can be no doubt. The Koran, in particular, has exercised a fanatical influence over Mahomedans. Though the generality of Hindoos are not only ignorant, but prohibited from the study of their own scriptures; yet Brahmans, to whom these sacred books are open, and held by them in the highest veneration, are the persons by whom the affairs of Hindoo governments are almost wholly directed; and though, in many cases, averse to the shedding of blood,* yet

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" of all that his enemies are doing; and when a fortunate " moment is offered by heaven, let him give battle; pushing " on to conquest, and abandoning fear." — Sir W. Jones, vol. vii. p. 308 and 324.

* A remarkable instance of Hindoo usages, as regard the blood, and even torture of enemies, is mentioned by Colonel Wilks, in his account of Mysoor or Maheshoor; which owes its name to the most noted exploit of Cali, consort of Siva, in the overthrow of Mahesh Asoor, the buffalo-headed monster. " This goddess," he adds, " delighting in blood, was then, " *and is now*, worshipped under the name of Chamondee, " (discomfiting enemies) on the hill of Mysoor; in a temple " famed, at no very distant period, for human sacrifices. " The images of this goddess frequently represent her with a

they have never been sparing of it; nor of the arts of treachery and intrigue, when power or dominion were to be acquired; which they, like the Mahomedans, equally believe to be a gift from heaven; and victory a sure proof of its approval.

But, independent of these positive laws, it is to be considered that despotism is nourished and supported in the lower stages of civilization, in all countries, by some of the natural propensities of the human mind. Man is every where, more or less, disposed to submit to a governing power, as his only protection against lawless violence. A military leader is the first protector of his tribe; and, as fortune favours, or talent promotes, his future acquisitions, he establishes a firmer hold over their respect and admiration. To what a pitch of enthusiasm is the attachment of the latter often carried for a brave and victorious chief! We have here the basis of arbitrary power; and as these beginnings progressively grow up into states, self-interest co-operates with other passions of the mind,

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" necklace of human skulls; and the Mysooreans never failed " to decorate their Chamoondee with a wreath, composed of " the noses and ears of their captives."— Wilks's South of India, vol. i. p. 34.

in attaching to the ruler, or prince, all who share, and all who aspire to participate, in the sweets of his power. All the governments of India may be said to have been founded on military adventure and the sword; and, when once established, the most fawning submission, the most abject flattery, are put in action to obtain its favours. The rivalry of courtiers, and supplicants, in these debasing arts, swells out the dispenser of gifts into an idol of earthly perfection, whose will is law, and whose vices, even, it becomes a virtue to gratify. And as power is thus established in its most formidable, because most lawless, shape; as no other form of government has ever been dreamed of, or contemplated, in India; as public or political rights can never be known, much less asserted, where they are not publicly discussed; there is no alternative, for the poor and the ignorant multitude, but hopeless submission to a fate which they also, from knowing no better, naturally conceive to be the will of heaven.

After the establishment of the Mussulman power in the Deccan, and the fall of Telingana, and other Hindoo states, Vijeyanuggur remained as the most celebrated empire in the south of India. It, however, had only a duration of about two centuries. It was

founded in 1343, by two fugitive officers of the dethroned monarch of Arunkel or Warangole (capital of Telingana). Its history presents us with a like scene of usurpations, treasons, and conquest, as the other despotisms of the East; till, at length, its encroachments towards the North, and the fame of its immense wealth, gave rise to the confederacy of the four Mussulman kings of the Deccan, which, as before noticed, terminated in the overthrow of the raja and his army, at Tellicota, in 1564, and the dreadful pillage and destruction of his capital; from which time the fall of the empire itself may be dated. Its name, indeed, indicates the spirit of its government, having been changed from *Videyanuggur*, the "City of Science," to *Vijeyanuggur*, the "City of Victory."

After the fall of Vijeyanuggur, the successors of Ram Raja retired to other positions to the south and east; till, at length, the last of the family, bearing a sovereign title, was expelled from his last fortress, Chandragiri, in 1646, in consequence of a succession of revolutions in his remaining territories, and took refuge with the raja of Bednore, formerly a servant of his family; shortly after which, the house of Vijeyanuggur is heard of no more.

The kingdom of Mysoor, which arose out of the ruins of Vijeyanuggur, exhibits also a like origin in military adventure and blood; and a similar series of intrigues, usurpations, murder, and conquest, in its progress to maturity; and, afterwards, as the causes of its final decay *

* In Colonel Wilks's History of the South of India, we have an anecdote of one of the Mysore rajas, shewing that despotic power changes nothing of its nature, in whosesoever hands it may be placed. Chick Deo Raj, who reigned from 1673 to 1704, employed the first years of his reign in financial arrangements, increase of revenue being, as usual, the object, with a view to foreign conquest, and extended power. But the Hindoo law being opposed to an augmentation of the *rate* of land taxation without the consent of the people, the raja had recourse to an expedient, against which there was no legal prohibition; viz. to propose taxes on other articles so burdensome and vexatious, as should induce the inhabitants to compound for their abolition by a voluntary increase of the land-tax. Chick Deo accordingly ordered twenty new taxes to be levied throughout the country, of which Colonel Wilks gives a list. One of them was a tax for "opening a door." The whole were so oppressive as to occasion great opposition, which the Jungum priests were supposed to be active in promoting. The priests were accordingly summoned to court on the plea of consulting them regarding the proposed measures; but treachery was suspected, and about 400 only obeyed the summons. The priests were received with the usual ceremonies, in a suit of tents, where, after the salutation of the raja, each priest passing from the canopy of audience into an adjoining square, supposed to contain refreshments, was received, as he entered, by assassins, who

The Rajepoot states were never entirely subjugated by the Mahommedans. The country was overrun by Mahommed Ghori, in 1193; and became tributary from that date to the throne of Delhi. The refractory conduct of its princes occasioned its being frequently invaded by the imperial troops, whose ravages and destruction were unmerciful. We have no other account of these principalities than what is common to all the other despotisms of the East; whilst the princes and chieftains, holding power, appear in these parts as elsewhere to have been in a constant state of internal dissension and hostility. After the fall of the Moghul power in Hindostan, Rajpootana became a prey to the Mahrattas, who visited the country annually to plunder, and exact contributions; and whose progress was consequently marked by the greatest enormities.

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quietly severed his head from his body, and threw the carcase into a pit prepared for the purpose. Chick Deo followed up this atrocious act by still further murders and barbarity in the country, and marching large bodies of cavalry into the provinces, with orders to put down every symptom of opposition without mercy, at length succeeded in carrying by force the augmentation he originally proposed of the public revenue.—Wilks, vol. i. chap. vi.

There were other petty chieftains throughout India, who, under the denomination of Naicks, Rajas, Wadeyars, Polygars, Zemindars, Gouds, or Potails of villages, &c. affected independence, and invariably exercised a rigorously despotic power within their respective limits.

But the Mahratta states are, and have long been, the most extensive and important of the Hindoo dominions in India; and a short account of them will serve for all. A common military adventurer, Shahjee, though nominally a subject of the king of Beejapoor, had seized and retained some of the southern provinces. His son, the renowned Sevajee, was a man of extraordinary parts. With ardour to undertake, and genius to execute, the most daring enterprizes, he succeeded, during a life of intrigue, treachery, and murder, of constant warfare against the Mahomedans of the Deccan, and a series of most extraordinary adventures, in adding considerably to the territories conquered by his father, of which he was solemnly proclaimed king.* In the hands of his successors, this kingdom grew up into a mighty empire, which, after a san-

* The ceremony took place in 1674, when Sevagee was forty-seven years old. He died in 1680, aged 53.

guinary contest, and indescribable havoc and destruction, succeeded in completely subverting the Mogul power in Hindostan, and dethroning and imprisoning its imperial monarch. In the prosecution of this object, immense armies were maintained, and devastations committed, equal to any that had ever marked the Mussulman troops; but in the zenith of its strength, this colossal despotism, being controlled in its operations by no fixed laws—by no better sense of right than the power of the sword—became, like its predecessor, a prey to faction, treachery, and usurpation. When the great officers of the empire felt themselves strong enough for the purpose of dismemberment, like the Mogul viceroys of a prior age, they separately established independent kingdoms, where each exercised all the real powers of sovereignty, with only a nominal dependence on the head of the empire. The Raja himself, the lineal descendant of Sevagee, being confined to Sattarah, and a small district round the fort, the Peshwa (formerly prime minister for civil affairs, and president of the Council of State), Scindia, Holkar, the Raja of Berar, and the Guicowar of Guzerat, seized, as their own power enabled them, on the provinces of this immense empire. One despot became

thus changed into many; for no other system is known in the East; and, in the true spirit of absolute power, with aggrandizement for its object, and boundless rapacity as the means to effect it, they soon fell into warring with each other and their neighbours, till at length they, who took the sword, have perished with the sword, and present us, at this day, with another memorable example of the natural termination to every career of lawless rule.*

The character of the Mahrattas, throughout all these transactions, has been that of the most rapacious plunderers. Their predatory habits are quite proverbial, and their conquests were, in a great measure, effected by laying waste the countries through which they passed. When, therefore, it is considered that, in their first triumphs over the Moguls, they demanded and exacted, where they could, a *chout*, or fourth, of the revenues; that they obtained, from the emperor, as before mentioned, a formal grant of this

* The paishwa is now a prisoner and pensioner of the British Government. Until the year 1817—18, he was looked up to as the head of the Mahratta empire; the other states deferring to his authority, when they found it for their interest to do so. Every Paishwa, however, on his accession, received from the confined Raja of Sattarah, the insignia of his office.

tribute, with power themselves to levy it on the disaffected provinces, that is, the viceroyalties, which had shaken off the imperial authority; the reader may judge of the state of misery and oppression to which the inhabitants of these devoted countries must have been reduced, who were thus subject to threefold plunder and extortion; first, of the imperial armies from Delhi, who still continued to carry off vast contributions from the Deccan; secondly, of their local Mussulman governors; and thirdly, of their equally insatiate Mahratta invaders.

The march of a Mahratta army is generally described as desolating the countries through which it passes, on either side its route, which may be thus easily traced by ruined villages, and destroyed cultivation. They plunder as they move along, seizing by violence, or by treachery, on all that is valuable, or any way conducive to their present security or ulterior views. Sevajee's depredations in this way were excessive; so that, at his death, his treasuries and arsenals were stocked even to exuberance. Among other acts of the kind, he plundered the rich city of Surat three different times; on one of which occasions only, his booty was estimated at one million sterling. In his celebrated in-

cursion into Drauveda, now called "the Carnatic," he is said to have carried off vast wealth; but the best proof, as well as the most characteristic trait, of his unbounded and indiscriminate depredations is, that he was at length distinguished by the appellation of "THE ROBBER," which was applied to him as an appropriate and exclusive title.

It was a fixed principle of Sevajee's government to be considered as in a state of constant warfare; on which account, a larger army was kept up than the ordinary revenue of his territories would maintain; and which, therefore, owed a great part of its subsistence to booty. At the annual festival called the Dessara,* formerly held with great pomp in the month of October, and before harvest time, the army was assembled, and after the feast, sent forth to raise contributions from the neighbouring provinces. Their demand was a *chout*, or one fourth, of the revenue paid to Mussulmans; and the districts which resisted were over-run with fire and sword; the inhabitants tortured and murdered; and

* This festival, apparently of great antiquity, and prescribed in a Hindoo work of authority, entitled *Vrata Raj*, or the religious duties imposed on monarchs, was revived by Sevajee on the establishment of his kingdom; and has since been annually continued by his successors in the Mahratta empire.

the country left a dreary waste to forewarn others of their fate, if not averted by ready compliance with these lawless exactions. It is added, by persons acquainted with the Mahratta tongue, that the language itself is descriptive of their manners and habits, no other abounding in such copious and definite expressions for *booty* and *plunder*.

As usual with the despotisms of the East, conspiracy, treachery, and assassination, marked the career of Sevajee, his descendants and successors; of which the following brief notice will suffice:—

At the age of seventeen, Sevajee threw off his allegiance, seized on his father's treasures, raised a corps of banditti, ravaged the country round, raised contributions, and set up for himself. One of his first exploits was to murder Baajee Gorepora, and 3000 of his followers, for having betrayed his father Shajee to the Beejapoor government. He treacherously murdered the raja of Jaowlee, and seized his territory and treasures. Extending his usurpations and plunder, an army from Beejapoor was sent against him. He feigned repentance and submission, invited the Mussulman general to a conference, stabbed him to the heart, and afterwards cut his army to pieces. Sambajee, the son and heir of Sevajee, con-

spired against his father, and joined the Moguls; but failing in his object, submitted; was kindly received by the father, and pardoned. Sambajee was afterwards treacherously seized by Aurungzebe, and most inhumanly murdered. His tongue was cut out for blaspheming the Mussulman prophet; his heart was next cut out; and his limbs and body separated, and thrown to dogs to be devoured.

When the Paishwa gained ascendancy in the empire, the descendants of Sevajee were confined to the fort and district of Sattarah. But the Peshwa family, though Brahmins, are as little exempt as other despots from blood and murder. Ragonath Row aspired to the Peshwaship in opposition to his two nephews, the legitimate heirs. He intrigued and openly warred against Madhoo Row the eldest; but was at length seized and imprisoned. Before Madhoo Row's death, Ragonath was released; and gave to his dying nephew the most solemn pledge of support and protection to his brother Narayen Row, who was to succeed him. Shortly after the accession of Narayen Row, however, Ragonath had him assassinated, in his own presence, (1773.) Though supported by the English government, he did not hold the Peshwaship long. The treacherous as-

sassination of Gungadhur Shastry, the Guicowar's minister at the court of Poonah, in July 1815, by Trimbuckjee Dainglia, the minister and favourite of the Paishwa, and ascertained to have been perpetrated under the Paishwa's direction, is another proof that caste is no restraint on the actions of a tyrant where caprice or vengeance require to be gratified.

The rise and progress of the other great Mahratta families have been marked by similar scenes of usurpation, treachery, and blood.

I have thus endeavoured to convey, by a series of historical facts, a correct view of the nature and character of Asiatic depotism. It is, as before observed, the only form of government known to exist throughout India; and from the lawless and rigorous spirit in which it has been ever, and universally, exercised, the inference is plain, that the whole population of these vast regions, thus subjected to a rule so thoroughly paralyzing in its effects, and continuing for ages to bear them down to the lowest depths of degradation, must necessarily be the same from generation to generation, whatever may be their religion, their philosophy, or the learning and civilization of the select few; and

that change or improvement are impossibilities under despots, regardless of every other object than the acquisition and confirmation of power, and reckless of the means by which it is to be obtained. In India, as elsewhere, it has mattered little to the interest, or the happiness, of the people at large, in whose hands, or in what caste, the power has been placed—the people have invariably been its victims.

Of the Mussulman despots of India, we have seen that, besides the fanatical persecution and forced conversion of their Hindoo subjects, their ruling principles of action, in all other respects, were only calculated to deaden every affection of the mind in those they governed, save what was indispensable for self-preservation. Where there was no fixed rule of succession to the throne, and the will of the reigning prince, the only law; the sword of the strongest became the best title to possession. To secure a seat so acquired, the successful prince distributed the most important offices of state, and the provinces, and more distant parts of his dominions, in governments to his sons, nearest relatives, or most trustworthy servants. The lust of independent power, and wealth, was however common to all; and in the prosecution of these objects, the closest ties of nature

as well as the principles of obedience and good faith, being most unscrupulously violated; it often happened, during the life-time of the reigning prince, but almost always at his death, that sons, parents, and brothers were in arms against each other. In these unnatural contests, every crime, even to the most cruel assassination, was justified by the value of the prize. It also frequently occurred, that when one prince or viceroy, instigated by the thirst of conquest, plunder or revenge, invaded the territories of a neighbour, another neighbour would, from similar motives, invade the dominion of the first; and so on with others; each of them deeming the absence of his neighbour's force, or any other cause of weakness, to be the best of all reasons for assault. Thus actuated, the Mahomedan depotisms of Asia have exhibited little more than continued scenes of war, treason, and devastation. The followers of these sanguinary despots, as lawless and unprincipled as their master, were just as faithful to his cause as their own interest required. Fidelity was not among the virtues they professed to esteem; and, when instigated by prospects of greater advantage or enjoyment, they hesitated not to murder, or to abandon, a leader, who had, in all pro-

bability, set them the example, by being himself the first and greatest violator of the most sacred of our social duties.

The loose principles of banditti were thus, though on a larger scale, the principles of every one of these Asiatic courts; for the acts above recorded are not to be taken as peculiar to particular persons or reigns, but characteristic of all. With the power to execute, the disposition to perpetrate deeds of perfidy and blood was never wanting, nor restrained by the sense of shame, of gratitude, or of duty. Success, and personal bravery, stamped eclat and credit, even on the greatest atrocities. Neither person nor property had any security among these barbarians, save where arms, and courage to use them, existed for their defence; and these were the monsters to whose sway for seven or eight centuries, the helpless inhabitants were subjected; and who, in addition to their unrestrained natural ferocity, thought it meritorious to plunder, torture, murder, and enslave the pagans of India.

This, however, is but a sketch of the transactions of the period alluded to. Whoever has a taste for atrocities of this nature; for details of lawless rapine, and wholesale butchery of the species; for flaying, and impaling alive, and other species of torture; for

hewing living bodies to pieces; for massacring prisoners in cold blood, and making hillocks of their bodies, and pyramids of their heads for public show; for hunting down the inhabitants of whole provinces like wild beasts; with other like modes of royal amusement, may be feasted to satiety in the history of the Mussulman conquests, and governments, of Hindostan and the Deccan, which is little more than a continued series of these disgusting barbarities.

How, then, can we wonder that the unhappy subjects of such ferocious rule—seeing that the prince and his nobles only sought aggrandizement and riches at their expense; and that plunder and extortion, massacre and captivity, were all they had to expect—were driven to the habitual practice of artifice, duplicity, and cunning, to protect themselves, as much as circumstances would admit, against the violence and exactions of their rapacious tyrants? And is it reasonable, let me add, or is it just, to impute qualities, which are thus forced on a people by the iron hand of power, as inherent defects of their natural character?

In respect to the civil institutions of these barbarians, I shall merely observe, that the inhabitants who escaped the fury of their

wars and military ravages, and were left to find a miserable subsistence in the provinces of the empire, were still subjected to the most sanguinary law that was ever yet inflicted on the human race. The Koran ordains war against infidels to be a religious duty, in which the women and children of the vanquished are condemned to slavery, and the men to death; and, acting upon this satanic ordinance, the Mussulman governments of India, in their mercy, condescended to fix a ransom, and to take one half the actual produce of the soil, as revenue, for not murdering and enslaving its original proprietors.

Those who are acquainted with the *utter impossibility* of so large a portion of the produce of any extensive tract of country being contributed, either as rent, or revenue, with a sufficient reserve, at the same time, for the barest maintenance of its cultivators, will easily conceive the extreme poverty, and misery, to which the inhabitants were every where reduced by the attempts to enforce it.

By this ferocious law, the original proprietors of estates have been swept from the face of the earth, or reduced, with their descendants, to the wretched condition of ryots, or cultivators, at half produce; and a state more replete with despair, more thoroughly

subduing the energies of the mind and body of man, could hardly be devised by the most mischievous ingenuity.

Other civil ordinances were equally founded, and administered, in the spirit of extortion. Courts of justice were opened in the principal towns, where decrees were sold to the highest bidder; and, in cases of property, one quarter of the value was reserved for payment of legal fees.* It pleased the royal despot also to proclaim himself sole proprietor of all the lands of his dominions, and universal heir of all his subjects; so that, where wealth chanced to be acquired, no part descended to the legitimate issue of the proprietor, except what a royal master, in his mercy, chose to bestow.

It is true, we read of a despot, here and there, more disposed than his fellows, to justice and moderation. In the true eastern style, this *rara avis* is pourtrayed as having "conferred happiness on the world, and re-"flected glory on the faith of Mahommed; as

* In the seventh report of the committee of secrecy, 1773, these courts are represented as being the "instruments of "power, not of justice; not only unavailing to protect the "people, but often the means of the most grievous oppression "under the cloak of the judicial character.

" having illuminated the earth with the bright " torch of justice, and cherished it with the " beams of beneficence ;" and universal prosperity springs up at once like a mushroom product, in every corner of the good despot's dominions.

There are, however, grounds to suspect, that these representations are greatly exaggerated by the partiality of original authors, and perhaps the lively fancy of the translator, who, pleased with the accomplishment of a task rarely undertaken, is willing to recommend it to his readers, by wrapping up facts in the garb of romantic fascination—facts which few of his contemporaries have the means to scrutinize ; still fewer are enabled to refute.

But let it be recollected, that the settled habits of man cannot change, like the aspects of an April sky ; and all that could be expected from a mild reign, among so many of an atrocious character, could only be a partial respite from anarchy and rapacity. The separate provinces, too, of these immense empires were but epitomes of the higher despotisms. The half, or more than half, independent governors of distant provinces exercised, within their own jurisdiction, all the powers of their master, even to life and death ; and though Akbar, and one or two others,

may have been influenced by a sincere love of justice, it is too much to believe, that all his deputies, or viceroys, were of the same temperament. We know on the contrary they were not. The principles of Mahomedan rule, however partially mitigated for a moment, were, therefore, always in force, to prevent any thing like permanent improvement in the condition of the people, or to raise them from that state of degeneracy into which brute power had plunged them, and which has been so absurdly mistaken for natural defect, or immutability, of character.

If we turn from this picture to that of the other governments of the East, we find nothing calculated to improve the condition, or alleviate the oppressions, of the people, save the absence of fanatical persecution. The incessant plunder and devastation of provinces; the perpetual marching and counter-marching of armies, with their lawless, predatory habits; the same scenes of usurpation, treachery, and violence, every where meet us, and prove, that wherever arbitrary power is established, it has nothing in common — no sympathy, with the interests and feelings of the people. Their fate is that of confirmed poverty and bondage; their condition admits of no varia-

bleness, nor shadow of change—it is the same to-day, as yesterday, and for ever.

In pure depotisms, laws and regulations are of no avail, except when they accord with the views or interests of the reigning power. Whatever favours the people, is violated without compunction; *sic volo sic jubeo* being above all law, the most wanton caprices and barbarities are exercised with impunity. In the sacred books of the Hindoos, though one-tenth, or one-sixth, of the produce of lands is prescribed as the proper revenue of a just monarch; yet, the principle or rule has never been practically observed in Hindoo states, at least not in modern times.

Under the Mahratta governments, the rates of tribute they demanded are fixed, or pretended to be fixed, under certain heads; as follows:—

Chout	25	per cent.
Sur desmookee	12½	
Sahotra	6	
Babti	3	

with certain claims for forage and corn*,

* Waring's Hist. Mahr. p. 170.—Mr. Waring says of these exactions, that "the wretched and devoted inhabitants were "oppressed and plundered by the insatiable avarice of the "Mahratta state."

making altogether about fifty per cent; and, if applied to the gross produce of lands, not varying in principle from the rate of Mahomedan taxation. But of both these revenue systems it may be said, that, however strongly they indicate the spirit of Indian despotism, they never were, because they never could be, literally enforced; the real practice being to exact, and plunder without any fixed rules, all that could be squeezed out of defenceless subjects. Like the Mussulman monarch, the Paishwa, as head of the empire, was universal heir of all his subjects. A son could not succeed to his father's property without the Paishwa's sanction; for which a proportionate payment was always required. He also received presents on making grants, and on allowing sons to succeed to grants made to their fathers. Gifts were also presented on the Paishwa's marriage, and on that of his principal chieftains; and likewise on several Hindoo festivals. These offerings in the aggregate were always considerable.

In this way it is easy to account for the great wealth, which has been so frequently found in the treasuries of Asiatic rulers, combined with the extreme poverty of their subjects. In countries where the existence of the government, and even the life of the reigning

prince, were so very precarious, there could be no public credit? An Asiatic despot, surrounded on all sides by military tyrants, as covetous, as ambitious, and as perfidious, as himself, bound by no tie of duty, good faith, or of justice, had no means of providing himself with the requisite supplies to defray necessary expenses—to indulge his gross appetites—to strengthen himself against foreign aggression, or domestic commotion and treachery—to ensure the fidelity of an army, as devoid of every good principle as their lawless leader—but in replenishing his coffers with all the wealth he could extort from his unhappy subjects. In the process of these exactions, tyrants, whose security and strength depended on the amount of their accumulations, and whose will was only to be restrained by the impossibility of getting more, drained every cup to the dregs.

The wealth of the country was thus drawn off from year to year, to be buried in the coffers of tyrants, to whom hoards were every thing. The general distribution of wealth and its natural consequences in the promotion of industry, were here unknown. Princes and their minions were the only wealthy part of the community; and their waste and extravagance the only circulation; so that,

whilst the courts of these monsters abounded with "barbaric pearl and gold," squalid poverty and misery stalked through every region of their dominions. So true is the declaration, "There is that scattereth, and yet "increaseth; and there is that withholdeth "more than is meet, but it tendeth to po-"verty."

These reasons equally apply to all the pure despotisms of India. Having no account of any Hindoo state, ancient or modern, which does not abound with treasons, conspiracies, usurpations, foreign wars, and internal commotions, robbery, and plunder; we may safely conclude that the Hindoo governments, though perhaps not quite so ferocious as the Mussulman, were still founded on principles confirmative of the poverty of the lower classes; and that their vast accumulations of wealth were, chiefly at least, confined to their temples, and to the treasuries of princes and their minions; where conquering armies seem always to have found them. In fact, Indian history not only limits its notice of great wealth to these depots, but we also know, that in every other part of the earth, wealth has never been plentifully and generally diffused among a people existing in great ignorance, and subject at the same time to the rigours of arbitrary power;

and we may, therefore, confidently pronounce on the impossibility of any such general diffusion having ever existed in India.*

In comparing Indian with European society, it should also be remembered that, besides the greater tyrants in their respective spheres, the country was every where covered with subordinate officers, such as Nabobs, Dewans, Foujedars, Amildars, Tehsildars, Jagheerdars, Zemindars, Polygars, Talookdars, Rajas, Naiks, Wadeyars, and various others; all of whom exercised their powers in the same arbitrary spirit, as pervaded the higher departments of the state. Many of these officers, when powerful enough from local causes, or the natural strength of the country they possessed, not only opposed, but maintained their independence of, the superior authority, exercising, in their little circles, the rigors and caprices of despots, even to life and death, with impunity. In the territories conquered, or ceded to the Company's go-

* A careful perusal of Ferishta's history will fully confirm the fact. He sometimes adverts to plunder in general terms, without entering into particulars; but whenever he gives a specification of the spoil, it is always of some rich temple or strong fort where wealth seems to have been accumulated for ages as a dead stock, or for purposes unconnected with the promotion of public prosperity.

vernment, these persons, or their descendants, were still found to possess and to exercise the same powers. Swarms of harpies were thus spread in every direction—even to the Mundils and Potails of villages—and *despotism established as it were in detail, in every corner of the land.* Power was here a licence to plunder and oppress. The rod of the oppressor was literally omnipresent; neither persons nor property were secure against its persevering and vexatious intrusions. The common transactions of life became objects of punishment or extortion. And no other principles being known or dreamt of in India than arbitrary power on the one hand, and abject submission on the other, a state of society was fixed and rooted, in the manners, the poverty, and the ignorance of the people, of which no parallel, nor resemblance, is any where to be found in European states.

Of the officers above mentioned (others might be added), it is requisite to keep in mind that they all held their situations at the will and pleasure of the sovereign power. Though some of the offices were considered hereditary, still there was no security for the inheritance against the caprice of rulers, or the violence of rivals, who might set themselves

up to contest the possession.* The sword was the sole guardian of private as of public rights. From this entire absence of security to the uninterrupted enjoyment of office, or property, the holders of power, from the highest to the lowest, were naturally more rapacious in its exercise; rapacity begat poverty, and poverty, ignorance; so that not an element, or principle, existed among the people to counteract, to check, or to mitigate the rigours of a tyranny which has thus triumphed for ages in India without change, or the means of change, in itself; and consequently, by reaction, confirming the immutability of all submitted to its sway.†

* In the history of the emperor Shere Khan, supposed to be one of the ablest men of his age, we have a remarkable proof of the sense entertained by Mussulmans of the rights of inheritance. Shere Khan's father was a Jagheerdar of the empire, and Shere was appointed to the management of the Jagheer, which, after his father's death, was confirmed to him from Delhi. But his brothers claiming a right to share with Shere in the inheritance of their father's property, Shere resisted the claim of his brothers, using the following argument: "*That there* "*were no hereditary estates in India among Mahommedans,* "*for that all lands belonged to the king, which he disposed of* "*at pleasure. That as he himself had a personal grant* "*of his estate, his brethren were out of the question.*"—Dow's Fer. vol. ii. p. 248.

† The only portion of India which can be said to have borne even a slight resemblance to the ancient structure of society

On this part of the subject, then, I shall only trouble the reader with a reference to three historical facts; because, as regards the state of the people, they will probably prove more than all the conclusions of reasoning and argument. We find it recorded, of the never-ceasing and intolerable depredations of Indian armies, that whenever they approached, or invaded, a province, the whole population of villages, towns, and districts, with their women and children, and all the food they could carry, would often migrate to the most unfre-

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in Europe is Rajpootana, which, as before mentioned, was never reduced to the state of an organized province of the Mogul empire; and where the Rajpoot chiefs are said still to hold their lands on the feudal system of tenure. These lords, or petty chieftains, are dignified with the title of Thakoor; and, like the barons of old, frequently yield but a nominal obedience to their reputed sovereign. But this partial check on the regal despotisms of Europe, was of no avail in Rajpootana; for, owing to the disturbed state of this, as of every surrounding country — the severe administration and perpetual invasion of the Mussulmans—the no less destructive extortions and annual ravages of the Mahrattas—and the constant state of hostility in which these chieftains appear to have been engaged with each other—the seeds of liberty were smothered in the birth; they never shot forth into the light of day, nor obtained in this (any more than in other parts of India) one moment's respite, or relief, from the all-subduing rigors of despotic sway.

quented hills and jungles, to avoid the rapacity of these merciless plunderers; where thousands died of hunger and want. So common were these migrations, throughout the period at least of the preceding sketch, as to be designated by a peculiar and appropriate appellation; the emigrants being called the Wulsa* of the district.

* Colonel Wilks, in his valuable history of the south of India, has the following pertinent observations on this remarkable practice. "Illustrations of the manners and immemorial "habits of a people are sometimes unexpectedly derived from "a careful attention to the elements or the structure of their "language. On the approach of an hostile army, the unfor- "tunate inhabitants of India bury under ground their most "cumbrous effects, and each individual man, woman, and "child above six years of age (the infant children being car- "ried by their mothers), with a load of grain proportioned to "their strength, issue from their beloved homes, and take the "direction of a country (if such can be found) exempt from "the miseries of war; sometimes of a strong fortress; but "more generally of the most unfrequented hills and woods; "where they prolong a miserable existence, until the depar- "ture of the enemy; and if this should be protracted beyond "the time for which they have provided food, a large portion "necessarily dies of hunger.

"The people of a district thus deserting their homes, are "called the *Wulsa* of the district. A state of habitual misery, "involving precautions against incessant war, and unpitying "depredations of so peculiar a description, as to require in "any of the languages of Europe a long circumlocution, is

The common practice of burying treasure, when by some lucky chance it was acquired, may be ascribed to the same cause; whilst the frequent Wulsas may perhaps account for a very large mass, in the aggregate of human beings, who still inhabit the hill and jungly countries all over India, known in different parts by different names; but a far more wretched and destitute race than the gypsies of Europe, or than some at least of the savages of America; of stunted growth, hideous appearance, and without any other habitation or food than what the forest affords them.

The second fact is, the shocking ceremony of the Joar, of which some instances have been above given. We have seen that the Hindoos, when driven to despair by the Mussulman arms, were in the habit of sacrificing their own

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" expressed in all the languages of the Deccan, and the south " of India, by a single word.

" No proofs can be accumulated from the most profound " research which shall describe the immemorial condition of " the people of India with more authentic precision than this " single word. It is a proud distinction that the Wulsa never " departs on the approach of a British army when unaccom- " panied by Indian allies."— South of India, vol. i. p. 303.

wives and children, by burning alive, or otherwise destroying them, to avoid the barbarities and pollutions they would have to endure, by falling into the hands of their conquerors. From facts like these, it is easy to conceive how dreadful must have been the fate of the sufferers; whilst the name or appellation it obtained throughout India, proves the cruelty to be of no unfrequent occurrence.* Even the horrors of the Inquisition in the west are not to be compared with those of an eastern Joar. In the former, individuals only suffered, and generally under the consolatory hope that their temporary pangs would be rewarded by a happy èternity; but, in the latter, thousands at a time were sacrificed; and with no other feeling, at the moment, than the conviction that the sparing of their lives would only be to expose them to greater cruelties.

The third fact will probably be more familiar to the reader, from information he may of late years have acquired regarding the Pindarie war, during the government of Marquis Hastings. It is a remarkable proof

* Numerous instances of it are given in the History of Hindostan.

of the anarchy and tyranny long prevalent in India, and of the deplorable state of its wretched inhabitants, that a power like that of the Pindaries should have grown into such formidable dimensions in the very heart of the country ; and, spreading terror through all the neighbouring states, should require for its suppression one of the largest British armies that was ever called into the field. There are authentic records of the existence of Pindaries, as a marauding body, for upwards of a century. Ferishta mentions them as warring against Aurungzebe, and his generals ; whence it is probable their ravages were of much older date. One of the Pindarie chieftains commanded 15,000 horse at the famous battle of Panniput. Their principal possessions were in, and near, the Veudhya mountains, stretching along the banks of the Narbudda into Bhopaul. Their ranks were constantly replenished with vagrants of all casts, and from every quarter of India ; men driven from their homes by oppression, despair, or famine, to seek a precarious subsistence by plunder. Thousands in this way flocked to the standard of a bold and enterprizing robber ; many of them from the redundant and starving population of the Company's own districts. Thus reinforced, the Pin-

daries seized on extensive territories, appropriating the lands to themselves; and transmitting them in full hereditary right to their descendants. Their power, previous to the war of 1817—18, was so formidable as to be not only dreaded, but courted by the Mahratta princes. Intimate alliances subsisted, of the Pindarie chiefs with Scindia and Holkar; both of whom encouraged, and participated in the fruits of Pindarie plunder. Divided into Durrahs, or tribes, each commanded by a sirdar, the Pindaries extended their ravages in all directions, and to all parts indiscriminately; marching with incredible rapidity, and pillaging without distinction friends and foes. Their incursions into the British territories were so frequent, and their devastations so extensive, as to require a military force to be annually employed against them. Their progress was generally marked by smoking ruins, and the most inhuman barbarities to persons of both sexes.* At

* Marquis Hastings observes of the Pindaries — "When it "is recollected that the association in question consisted of "above 30,000 mounted men, all professedly subsisting by "plunder, the extent of theatre necessary to furnish an ade- "quate prey may be well conceived. The whole of the "Nizam's subjects, as well as the inhabitants of the northern "circars of the Madras presidency, were constantly exposed

times they were said to wallow in abundance; at others to want the common necessaries of life. Although existing in vast numbers, they presented no vulnerable points of attack. The destruction of a chieftain, however powerful, abated nothing of the existing evil; for another enterprising robber at once supplied his place. The whole body of Pindaries being brought together from inability to procure, otherwise, the means of subsistence, and consisting of desperate wretches from various countries, and of different religions and casts, had no other bond of union than the common object of plunder, and were, therefore, equally ready to follow any leader who would conduct them to the means of support.*

" to devastation. It was not rapine alone, but unexampled " barbarity, that marked the course of the spoilers. Their " violation of the women, with circumstances of peculiar in- " dignity, which made multitudes of the victims throw them- " selves into wells, or burn themselves together in straw huts, " was invariable; and they subjected the male villagers to re- " fined tortures, in order to extract disclosure where their " little hordes of money were buried." Summary, p. 19.

* One of the Pindarie chiefs, Cheetoo or Seeto, was at the head of 20,000 horse, besides a body of infantry and artillery, at the breaking out of the last Mahratta war.—Origin of Pindaries, cap. 5.

In some of the worst governed countries of Europe, we sometimes hear of small bands of banditti existing for a season in the most retired parts of forests, or mountains, and occasionally issuing from their lurking places to commit depredations in the neighbourhood, or to surprise unwary travellers. But in India, universal despotism has for ages poured forth its victims, from every province of these vast regions, to establish at length under our own observation, a dominion of banditti, of strength sufficient not merely to awe, but to ravage with impunity, the most powerful of the surrounding states. Marauders of the same character, but of different names, are to be found in many parts of India.* It may, indeed, be reasonably questioned, whether

* The most noted pass under the names Looties, Colleries, Bheels, Thugs, Coolies, Remoosees, Decoits, &c.

In the 13th vol. of the Asiatic Researches, p. 282, there is an account of several tribes of banditti, existing under different names, in the Dooab and in the territories of the Nawaub Vizier, with their common methods of practising depredation and murder. Authentic accounts of this description may be safely referred to for instructive information, as to the state of a country in which large masses of people are from age to age driven to acts of the most barbarous and atrocious cruelty for the means of subsistance; and who are also frequently supported by the resident local authorities, who hesitate not, on such occasions, to partake of the robbers' plunder.

the whole Mahratta empire is not essentially Pindarie. All the Mahratta governments are, and ever have been, proverbially predatory.* The severities of Aurungzebe's administration are said to have mainly contributed to the rapine of Sevajee's dominion. At this period "contributions were exacted "instead of settled revenues; the satellites of "the court were guilty of the most shameful "abuses; the ryots, thus oppressed by the "Imperialists, abandoned their farms in des- "pair; *and in their turn became plunderers for "want of employment.*"† It is thus that the rigors of Asiatic despotisms spread anarchy through every branch of the internal administration; drive the people to habits confirmative of their degradation; and consequently

* Lord Hastings, in speaking of Scindia, observes—"Many "of the neighbouring states acknowledged tribute as due "from them to the Maharajah, of Gwalior, by which they "purchased an exemption, ill observed, from predatory in- "cursions." Lord Hastings, at the termination of the Mahratta war abolished these tributes, ceding to Scindia in lieu thereof, territory yielding a certain revenue of greater amount than the abolished precarious tributes. The minister, however, was dissatisfied with the change, for which he gave the following reason. "True," said he, "there is a visible, "immediate profit, but then there is the loss of an advantage "which we (Mahrattas) think inestimable; *that of having a "finger in every man's dish.*"—Summary, p. 22.

† Origin of Pindaries, p. 10.

paralyze every principle intended by nature to promote the improvement of man.

How inconsistent, then, is it in those who admit the high state of wealth, civilization, and learning, to which the Hindoos had attained, previous to the Mahomedan conquests, to contend for their present immutability, or inherent inferiority of character. If the Hindoos ever were in the state above described, they must have changed, and greatly changed; but is not despotic power sufficient to account for the change, as well as the origin and confirmation of degeneracy? Has it not been the fate of the Greeks in Europe, and from precisely the same cause? No one will pretend that the soil, climate, or religion, of Greece has so changed, as to produce a total change in the character of the people; and why, if it be not so, are the modern Greeks in a lower stage of degradation than the modern Italians, but because the despotism of one country is far more rigorous, and intense, than the despotisms of the other? It is the despotism of Asia that alone remains unchanged; and that consequently admits of no change in the character, or condition, of its subjects. The hordes of Toorks, and Moghuls, to the north of the Himala barrier, are as wild and wan-

dering, at this day, as in the age of Attila, or Chengis Khan; and all the Mussulman states, to the south of that range, in the same mental darkness, political misrule, and poverty, as the earliest of their predecessors.

If, then, the causes here assigned produce universally the same effects, why seek for others in India, where the rule of tyrants, justly called the scourge of the human race, has, from the beginning of history to the present hour, had its fullest sway?

But if the reader can doubt the facts above detailed, or the conclusions thence deduced, because they have occurred in a far distant clime, whose history he may not have familiarly contemplated; let me implore him to turn his eyes to the existing state of Turkey, or the governments of northern Africa; under his more immediate observation. Let him contemplate the ferocious spirit with which war has, of late years, been carried on against Infidels, as they are termed, in the Morea. Let him consider the total absence of justice in the provinces; the insecurity of person and property; the avowed practice of piracy; and slavery of prisoners; the pleasant exercise of the bowstring; the happy method of settling differences, and dissatisfactions, by assassination,—sometimes of the

reigning prince—sometimes of viziers, pashas, hospodars, and other troublesome officers; and often by the wholesale butchery of unresisting subjects; whose heads are exposed on the gates of the royal palace, for the edification of the people, and the amusement of their sovereign. Let him, I say, consider these simple facts: and then ask his own reason, whether such a scourge, in the shape of human government, does not stand forth to the world, like the Upas of the forest, breathing destruction around, and blighting every germ of improvement within the influence of its poison.

Yet this is but a facsimile of the despotisms of the East; to which the character and condition of the inhabitants have for ages been compelled to bow. That a difference in this respect exists between the East and West is undeniable; but is it possible to doubt the cause, or to dispute its never failing effects? We have seen that the conquerors of Europe, when they settled in its fertile plains, became gradually fascinated with the polished manners, the usages, and literature of the vanquished; and finally adopted their religion, the best of heaven's gifts to man;—thus planting the seeds of improvement, which, in process of time, made irresistible

progress to maturity. Whereas, the Mussulman conquerors of the East carried with them a sensual and ferocious creed, by which they were taught to despise and abhor, not only the persons, but the civilization, literature, and religion, of all whom they called infidels; and scorning every light but that of the Koran, which dooms Pagans to the curse of indiscriminate destruction,—their very system, and principles, were not only adverse to all improvement; but calculated to perpetuate the reign of darkness, poverty, and despair.

Of the real character of the natives of India, I have already recorded my opinion, "that they are capable of every virtue, and "of every acquirement, that can adorn the "human mind;" and I here confidently reassert the same belief. For proof, I appeal to all those who have held much intercourse with the natives, during their services in India—whether they have not met with numerous instances of great natural sagacity, quickness of apprehension, sound intellect, a peculiar aptitude for patient investigation, and, I venture to add, honesty, gratitude and attachment to those who use them well. I appeal to their handy works, and the progress made in the useful arts of life, in all situations where oppression is not supreme.

I appeal to the many indications, which are now to be met with, of advances made in European literature, science, and principles. I appeal to the concurrent testimony of many of the ablest, and most experienced, of our Indian servants now in England. And, finally, I appeal to the public records of the Indian governments, in which many volumes of papers, and correspondence with natives, are inserted; and in which it will be found (I speak from knowledge of the fact), that the productions of the Asiatic, both as to sound reasoning, and eloquence of expression, have often a decided advantage over those of his European superior.

The preceding remarks may be thought to give a different view of the state of Indian society and governments to what has been commonly entertained in this country. My aim has been to shew that there is nothing in this people of a mysterious cast—that their present degraded condition is not out of the ordinary course of nature—but rationally to be accounted for by causes which are invariable and universal in their effects; and, therefore, to be counteracted by the same remedies which have proved effectual in the improve-

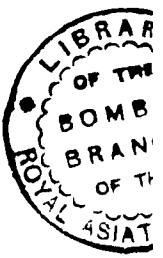
ment of other races of human beings. If I dissent from other writers, I may say in defence of my own impressions, that they are the result of long residence and personal intercourse with this interesting people; and I refer again with satisfaction to the extracts I have already given from Bishop Heber's Journal, for confirmation of my opinions. To sum up the whole, I would therefore add, that of all the works, which the labours and learning of Sir W. Jones, Capt. Wilford, Mr. Colebrook and others have brought within the ken of English readers, there is not one, relating to laws, to morals, to politics, or history, that does not contain intrinsic proof of the despotic character of the ancient Hindoo and Mussulman governments, and of ignorance, superstition, and slavish submission, on the part of the governed. There are, however, two classes of writers on this point: one who laud beyond measure the former civilization, morality, learning, and wealth of Hindoos—the other, as we have seen, passing the severest judgment on their natural and incorrigible depravity. As is generally the case, truth will probably be found between the two extremes. The Hindoos of the present day I take to be, in no respect, different from the Hindoos of times past, as to man-

ners, institutions, and attainments. What despotism forced them to be ages ago, despotism forces them to be still.—Despotic power, considered as a cause, is every where invariable in its effects—neither caste, nor complexion, alter its spirit; it is the same in the hands of a Mussulman, a Hindoo, or an European—and as regards the character and attainments of Hindoos, viewed as a people, I can see nothing that the influence of despotic power is not fully sufficient to account for. I cannot, therefore, agree in Sir W. Jones's extravagant praises of the ancient Hindoos, their civilization and literature on the one hand; or in the severe judgments of Mr. Mill on the other; more especially in the preference given by the latter to the Mussulmans of India. My own observation of the two sects inclines me to a contrary belief. Mussulmans are sensual and luxurious, fond of ease, indolence, and pleasure; and where they have the means, these propensities are often indulged to the greatest excess. Hindoos, on the other hand, are of more abstemious habits—of a temperament and disposition much more favourable to intellectual attainments—greedy of knowledge, and delighted with it when acquired. There are other sects, at the head of which, for

energy and talent, I should place the Parsees of the western side of India. Add to these, Armenians, native Portuguese, and Anglo-Indians, and we have a mass of native population whose capacity for moral improvement no man can reasonably doubt; and whose progress—give them but the same advantages—would be as certain, and as rapid, as that of any, even the most civilized and enlightened nations of the earth.

END OF PART II.

INDIA.



PART III.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I NOW submit the Third Part of this work to the judgment of the Public, but with considerable doubt as to the effect it may produce. It is intended to illustrate a subject, of which accurate knowledge in this country seems to be almost universally wanting. Without this accurate knowledge, to legislate for India must be like groping in the dark; where every movement, directed by chance, may plunge us into irretrievable error. In this view, and to shew the effect of our financial systems on the present state and condition of the people, details are necessary, to enable the reader to comprehend, as well the principles of our administration, as the universality of its operation. To the careless and superficial reader these details may ap-

pear tiresome; but I anxiously hope they may not be deemed useless, or superfluous, by others. I have endeavoured to compress them as much as seemed to me to be consistent with a full understanding of so important a question; and I can safely add, that the labour of compression has been far greater than would be required on many other works of a wider range.

This Part is divided into two chapters. The first contains a concise account of the origin, principles, and progress of our revenue settlements in the countries conquered, or acquired, by the Company's Governments in India. The second notices the effect of our financial system, as regards the treatment and condition of the people; and the revolution it has occasioned in the state of landed property.

It may be also right to apologize for the numerous quotations contained in this work, I could easily have given the substance of them in my own words; but then the whole might appear as my own statement or opinions — consequently, liable to cavil and doubt. As it is, I hope the reader will at least be convinced that the facts adduced, and the conclusions drawn from them, are abundantly supported by evidence derived from the highest existing Indian authorities.

ON THE REVENUE SYSTEMS OF INDIA UNDER THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S GOVERNMENT, AS TENDING TO PERPETUATE THE DEGRADED CONDITION OF THE NATIVES.

CHAPTER I.

Basis of the Revenue Systems, or Land Tax, of India.—Mussulman System, and Revenues of Bengal, including the Tumar Jumma.—Mussulman System of Taxation, according to the best law authorities, with its administration in Bengal under successive Viceroys or Governors.—Dewanny Grant.—Continuance of the Mussulman Revenue System under the Company's Administration.—Modes of Assessment, and Collection, in lands under the immediate management of the Officers of Government, that is, without the intervention of Farmers, Zemindars, &c.—Permanent or Zemindary Settlement in Bengal, with the Zemindar, Polygar and Mootehdar Settlements at Madras.—Ryotwar Settlement.—Mouzawar or Village Settlement.— New Ryotwar Settlement.—Concise account of Malabar with the attempts made to introduce the Ryotwar Settlement into that Province.—Concluding remarks, with particular reference to the Zemindar, Ryotwar and Mouzawar Systems.—Other heads of Revenue, including the Salt and Opium Monopolies.—General Statement of the Revenues of British India taken from official Documents.*

Doctor Blair has observed that "Industry "is the law of our being; it is the demand of "nature, of reason, and of God." Without industry, there can be no change in the circumstances of man. His lot is that of never-varying poverty and ignorance; the corner stones of despotic power in every region of the earth. Intelligence and wealth have no root in the dwellings of the inactive. Where the constitution of society is of a nature to

* Where references are made to particular parts or pages of the present treatise the figures are, for distinction sake, printed in Antique, and the letters in Italic.

confirm the general poverty of the people, the powers of mind and body become equally paralyzed. Without the hope of enjoyment — without the prospect of secure possession — who would exert his faculties to acquire? In poverty, a population stagnates, torpid and immoveable like the waters of the Asphaltic lake; and containing within itself no principle, nor power, to rouse industry into action, nor to stimulate a single wish for improvement.

Having given in Part II., an historical sketch of the state of India, up to the middle of last century, to account for the impoverished and degraded condition of its inhabitants, it is unnecessary now, to say more on that subject, than that the same poverty and ignorance have continued to this hour, to be their unaltered fate. Of the rise and progress of the British dominions in India, accurate accounts will be found in the able works of Orme, Wilkes, Mill, and others; to which the reader may refer, as well for the interesting details, as the instruction, they convey. He will there read of wars, usurpation, treachery, and rapine, equal to any thing of the kind in preceding ages. He will see that the causes, which first sunk, have ever since continued to keep down the many in the lowest

depths of degradation and wretchedness; that improvement was impracticable where fire and sword were the moving principles of every existing government; and that every change has been, to the people, but a change of oppressors. New forms of government, and domination, have risen and set, as the most powerful prevailed; but these revolutions brought no relief to subjects suffering from the grinding exaction of their successive masters; who, however unlike in some features, were the image of each other in the practice of rapaciousness. One of the most oppressive systems of revenue ever known, continues to be enforced within the limits of our Indian empire. It perpetuates that extreme poverty and wretchedness into which the people were for ages plunged by their Mahomedan conquerors; in consequence of our adopting from the latter the financial principles, and rate of taxation, which they imposed, as the price of blood, on vanquished Pagans. And this is the important point to which attention should now be directed; were it but to lay the groundwork of that prosperity, which it must be as much the wish, as it is the duty, of the British government to impart to its Indian subjects.

SECTION I.

BASIS OF THE REVENUE SYSTEMS OF INDIA WITHIN THE BRITISH TERRITORIES.

In my former publication of 1814—in the first Speech and its Appendix—a concise account is given of the land tax of India, the chief source of revenue; the origin of this detestable exaction; with references to the highest Indian authorities, and to official documents, for concurrent proofs as to its operation and effects. I then earnestly entreated the attention of the British legislature to the enormity of this evil. I again as earnestly repeat the entreaty; hoping it may attract the notice of Parliament, and the British public, in the discussions which must shortly take place in regard to the future administration of India; for, in as far as it entails poverty on the agricultural class, it affects nine tenths, or perhaps ninety-nine hundredths, of the whole population; and, until it be modified or repealed, will materially obstruct, if not bid effectual defiance to, the best plans that can be suggested for their improvement. The subject is of so much importance to the future good government of India—to the satisfaction and comfort of the inhabitants, —and to the increase of our commercial intercourse with that country, that

I shall perhaps be pardoned for recapitulating the heads, or prominent features, of that system; which, one would think, only requires a simple exposition of facts, to be consigned to the execration of every mind that can feel for the distresses, or desire the welfare, of its fellow creatures.

Basis of revenue settlements in India.

It has been already stated that the Mussulmans, on establishing their dominion in Hindostan, applied the principles of the Koran, and of their most celebrated law tract, the *Hedaya*, to the formation of their financial system. They accordingly asserted a proprietary right to all lands they conquered; and fixed that one half the gross produce of the soil should be the tribute, or tax, to be exacted from infidel cultivators, as a merciful compensation for not murdering the male population, and enslaving the women and children.*

Without entering into the merits of the dispute on the question of right to landed

* "The learned in the law allege that the utmost extent "of tribute is one half of the actual product; nor is it allow-"able to exact more, but the taking of a half is no more than "strict justice, and is not tyrannical, because, *as it is lawful* "*to take the whole of the persons and property of Infidels,* "*and to distribute them among the Mussulmans,* it follows "that taking half their incomes is lawful *à fortiori.*"—Hedaya, Book ix. chap. 7.

For further notice of the Mussulman law, *vide page* 318, *and Chap.* II. *infra.*

Basis of revenue settlements in India.

property in India, I shall merely notice in this place — as bearing on the principles of that taxation which we are about to discuss — what the enquiries, which this controversy gave rise to, have undeniably established. In Travancore, Malabar, and other countries, into which the Mussulman arms had not penetrated (at least not till the days of Hyder and Tippoo Sultaun), a class of landed proprietors — an absolutely titled aristocracy — have existed from time immemorial to the present hour; with rights to the possession of their respective estates, as full, as clearly defined, and as well understood, as in any part of the civilized world.

From the plain import of the laws of Menu, which, among a variety of other confirmatory passages, declare "*cultivated land to be the* "*property of him who cut away the wood, or* "*who first cleared and tilled it*,"—from the tenor of deeds of undoubted antiquity, for the sale and alienation of estates, to be found in what Colonel Wilkes calls the "Mackenzie Collection,"— and from the traces of individual proprietary right discovered in Canara, Tanjore, and other countries, in which the Mussulman governments had not, or only partially, been established, — there is every reason to conclude, that this right was universal under the ancient Hindoo dynasties.

Basis of revenue settlements in India.

It is also proved that, in countries *long subject to the rule of Mahomedan governors, their exactions had actually extinguished the traces of private property in land, by the annihilation, or dispersion, of those who were its rightful possessors;* that in countries (such as Tanjore, Tinnevelly, and Canara) in which the Mahomedan rule had been only partial, or temporary, this right was in progress of actual extinction; and approached nearer and nearer to its term, in proportion to the duration of Mussulman tyranny; the proprietors, from fear of Mussulman exactions and severities, gradually deserting or disowning their estates and leaving them to be managed by their tenants, or Ryots.* In Malabar, under the government of Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultaun, most of the Hindoo landed proprietors were compelled to seek refuge in Travancore. I was personally acquainted with some who, from the same causes, had deserted their estates, and retired for safety into Coimbetoor. We have thus a collection of facts, of indisputable authority, to prove that, wherever the Mussulman dominion was established, and had long prevailed, in India,

* The term Ryot is commonly used to express an actual cultivator of the soil; but it means properly a tenant of land paying rent —and a trader or artificer paying taxes.

Basis of revenue settlements in India.

the complete degradation of one of the most important classes of society — the landed proprietors — was the sure consequence. These were either reduced to the state of cultivators of their own patrimony, for such a share only of its produce as barely preserved them, and their families, from starvation; or driven, as fugitives from their own lands, to seek a subsistence by service, intrigue, force of arms, or common robbery and plunder, in other countries.*

Although the Hindoo rulers of ancient India were never at a loss for expedients to ease their loving subjects of the burthen of superfluous wealth; still private property in land seems to have been recognized by them as a sacred right, which even the hand of despotism would rarely violate; at all events, not till the Hindoos had repossessed themselves of the Mussulman provinces in Hin-

* This is a statement of facts ascertained not only by the author, but by others (as official records attest) who have personally served in the provinces alluded to. It is a somewhat different view of the Mahomedan law of conquest, from that given in an anonymous work on the "Law and Constitution of India," published in 1825. The difference, however, consists more in the view given of the practical operation of the law, than in the principles of the law itself, as will be seen hereafter, when I shall have occasion to refer more particularly to the valuable information contained in that work.

dostan and the Deccan; after which, even Hindoo rulers — such is the force of evil example — had no scruples, as late events have proved, to tread in the steps of their unrighteous predecessors.

Basis of revenue settlements in India.

When the British power supplanted that of the Mahomedans in Bengal, we did not, it is true, adopt the sanguinary part of their creed; but from the impure fountain of their financial system did we, to our shame, claim the inheritance of a right to seize upon half the gross produce of the land as a tax; and wherever our arms have since triumphed, we have invariably proclaimed this savage right; coupling it, at the same time, with the senseless doctrine of the proprietary right to these lands being also vested in the sovereign, in virtue of the right of conquest.* This doctrine, it is true, accords

* Col. Wilkes, vol. i. p. 116. quotes a Hindoo commentator, Jagganatha, who with a courtesy, and consideration for opinions established by authority, peculiar to the natives of India, also mentions the doctrine of the "earth being the property of powerful conquerors, not of subjects cultivating the soil;" but Col. Wilkes adds, that neither Jagganatha, nor any other supporters of the same doctrine, can produce a text which any man of plain understanding would acknowledge as authority. Col. Wilkes has entered into the controversy on this subject, at considerable length. In his work entitled "Historical Sketches of the South of India," there is a long

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with the precepts of the Koran; but is diametrically opposed to the plain import, and letter of the laws of Menu. Neither the authority, however, of the "Divine legislator," nor the absurdity and injustice of the principle itself, nor the evidence and proof of existing proprietary rights, could deter the British government from preferring the more rigorous and destructive system of the Mussulmans.

If a person of reflecting mind were to propose to himself a case of barbarous, or semi-barbarous conquerors, over-running a fertile and extensive country, densely peopled, long settled, and advanced in civilization—take modern China for an example—and declaring themselves, in virtue of the conquest, sole proprietors of all the lands of the empire, with a right, as sovereigns, to one half of the gross produce as a tax; he could not conceive the possibility of such an event, without its involving indescribable violation of property and private rights; together with extreme oppression, from the cruel operation of the tax. And if the most civilized nation on earth were to supplant the former conquerors; and, pro-

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chapter, (the fifth,) which, as well for the minute information it contains, as the ability of the performance, every person should consult who desires to be enlightened on this important topic.

fessing a desire to promote the prosperity of the country, were still to assert the same financial rights merely because they had been enforced by their predecessors; would it not be deemed a sorry excuse for the folly of such a proceeding, or the enormity of its injustice? Yet all this has been done by the British government in India. These are the maxims, if maxims they can be called, on which the revenue systems in India are every where based — maxims wherein Mussulman ignorance or fanaticism may glory, but for which a Christian government ought to blush. When the caliph Omar ordered all the learning of the Alexandrian library to be destroyed; because, if it accorded with the Koran, it was useless, if it differed from it, pernicious; we can all smile at the barbarous absurdity of the decree. Whether our own predilection for Mussulman finance be, or be not, a wiser passion, will be proved in the following pages.

Basis of revenue settlements in India.

It will be known to persons, who have had any thing to do with the productions of land, that in any considerable tract of country, varying in soil, situation, and climate, half the gross produce is by no means sufficient for the maintenance of the cultivator and his family, and the requisite expenses of husbandry. In

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India, as in other countries, there are, interspersed here and there, fertile and well watered vallies, whose annual produce is so great as to be able to afford that the half, and in some places that more than the half, should be paid as rent, or free revenue, with a sufficient reserve for the Ryots' maintenance and expenses; but in the generality of lands, six, seven, eight, and nine-tenths of the produce are indispensable for the latter purpose.* It is therefore obvious that a tax of half the produce, even if it could be fairly assessed, can never be universally levied from the inhabitants of the country. It is also obvious, that there are insurmountable difficulties in the

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* In the evidence taken before the Committees of the House of Commons, on the Corn Laws in 1814 and 1821, the proportion of the produce of land which goes to *rent* does not, on an average, exceed *one-fourth*, but this *fourth* is the property of another individual — *the rent paid to a landlord;* and if Government thought proper to tax this estate, it would probably be 5 or 10 per cent. of the *net rent;* which tax, in the case supposed, would bear the proportion of $1\frac{1}{4}$ or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. only to the *gross produce.* To compare with this, take the declaration of the Madras Revenue Board in May, 1817, whence it appears that "The conversion of the Govern-" ment share of the produce (of lands) is in some districts as " high as 60 or 70 per cent. of the whole."— Vide Selection from Ind. Rec. Vol. i. p. 872.

Many other authorities might be quoted to the same effect.

way of valuing, with any degree of accuracy, the produce of extensive countries varying with the difference of seasons, weather, the means of irrigation, the various articles of cultivation, the degrees of industry employed, the distance or proximity of markets, the means of sale, the frequent fluctuations of prices;—liable also to accidents, such as inundations, tempests, droughts, blights, &c. neither to be foreseen nor obviated. The attempt to make such a valuation has in every instance proved its impracticability. Yet the native assessors, employed on this duty, fearing that the avowal of the truth would be thought, by their European superiors, a disqualification for office, have invariably produced specious accounts of the measurement, culture, and produce of the lands of their respective villages, on which the revenue is nominally collected; but which the author of these sheets, as well as the highest Indian authorities, have, on examination, always found to be fabrications. The fact is, that the native assessor, aware of the impossibility of executing the task imposed on him, but feeling at the same time the necessity of presenting some plausible indication of its performance, assembles the most influential persons in the villages; and this conclave agree among them-

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selves to write against the names of each cultivator the portion of produce, or the sum of money, he is required to pay. This is not only an arbitrary proceeding, full of error, but liable to all the abuses in favour of men of influence, and to the detriment of more helpless inhabitants, which may be expected from persons, whose propensities to corrupt dealing are not to be controuled. So little pretension, indeed, have these accounts to accuracy, that some have been found to contain items of cultivated lands, with a tax annexed equal to and often greatly exceeding, the value of the gross produce. In other instances, tracts of cultivated lands have been wholly omitted; and in others, a minute specification given of produce, from spots never known to have been any thing but waste, or jungle. The native assessor, however, is aware that the higher he raises the revenue of the villages within his survey, the more he will recommend himself to the favour of his European superior: and the collector himself, also knows that the constant increase, misnamed "improvement," of the revenue will always be his strongest claim on the revenue board, and government, at the presidency, to praise

and promotion. In consequence, each collectorship has been taxed, or assessed, to the utmost farthing, which it was possible to extort from helpless Ryots; with the reserve only of what was necessary for the private embezzlement of the native officers. Basis of revenue settlements in India.

Can we then wonder at the universal and wretched poverty which this system has entailed on the country? or that the Committee of the House of Commons, in describing it, should say that "the whole system "thus resolved itself, on the part of the public officers, into habitual extortion and injustice," whilst "what was left to the "Ryot was little more than what he was "enabled to secure by evasion and concealment?"*

The same view of Indian systems of finance is given in various official documents, and works of high authority. But the most important is the very accurate and luminous judgment passed on this subject by the Court of Directors in their letter to Bengal of the 19th September 1792, in which they observe—"The finance principle of the Mogul "government, which was *to collect continually*

* Vide 5th Report, p. 5—117, et passim.

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" *upon the actual produce of lands*, has from its " nature led to concealment, chicanery and " fraud. In proportion as the demands of the " sovereign were enhanced, these acts were " multiplied, and the character of the people " of every rank debased. The great extent " of the provinces now held by us, the vast " details of their accounts, voluminous for " every village, and particularly liable to " falsification, loss, and decay; the igno- " rance, incapacity, and want of principle, " too common among the Zemindars; the " changes perpetually happening throughout " the country among the native officers of the " revenue, the corruption of these officers, " their fraudulent alienations of land, their " indolence and mismanagement; the general " inexperience of our servants in revenue " affairs during the first years of the De- " wanny; and the frequent alterations which " have since taken place, both in respect to " them, and to the mode of administering the " finances; the very different nature of our " government, and the calamities which the " country has sustained; all these circum- " stances, to mention no others, have con- " curred to involve the real amount of the " produce of the lands in great intricacy and

"obscurity; and the same causes, joined "to the unceasing struggle between oppres- "sive exactions and fraudulent evasions, have "produced numberless pretences and dis- "guises, increasing continually both the ne- "cessity and the difficulty of instituting "effective laws for the restoration of recipro- "cal equity and good faith." In a subsequent paragraph it is added, that our government "had been occupied in all time past" (a period of near thirty years) "in a degrading "struggle, perpetually subsisting throughout "the country for taxes and rents."*

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These are the reasons which the Court adduced for concurring in the famed Zemindary or permanent settlement—a system introduced by the Marquis Cornwallis in 1789, no doubt with the best and most humane intentions, but certainly with very imperfect knowledge of the country: and without due consideration of existing rights, or the consequences likely to flow from so abrupt and important a change.

But a short review of the proceedings of the revenue department, previously to 1789, will best exemplify the state of the country,

* 2nd Report, Appendix, p. 166.

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and how far it was prepared for the important change then introduced. And as the Mogul or Mussulman system was thus the foundation of our own, it is right we should first understand how the archetype itself was constructed.

SECTION II.

REVENUE SYSTEMS IN BENGAL PREVIOUS TO 1789.

MUSSULMAN ADMINISTRATION.

Considering the great importance of this part of the subject, I must entreat the reader's patience while laying before him some dry details of the origin, progress, and principles of revenue settlements in India. The account given in the preceding section, although the result of practical experience, may still be said to be but general assertion. Inquisitive minds will probably require some more satisfactory illustration. The following facts are therefore submitted, as being of undeniable authenticity.

In the Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, of July

1812, and its appendix,* it is stated that the settlement of Bengal, in Akbar's time, (1582) by Raja Tooder Mull, or Turymull,—that is, the revenue settled on the lands,—and called Tumar Jumma, or standard assessment, amounted to ..... Rupees. 10,693,152

In 1658, some few lands were added, and the revenue was raised by Sultan Suja, but chiefly by means of additional imposts called Abwabs,† to 13,115,907

In 1722, by Jaffier Khan, it was raised by means of additional Abwabs,† to 14,547,043

In 1728, by Suja Khan, do. do. to 16,418,513

In 1755, by Ali Verdi Khan, do. do. to 18,644,067

In 1763, by Cossim Ali Khan, do. do. to 25,624,223

This revenue was collected under fourteen

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* Vide Mr. Shore's (Lord Teignmouth) Minute of June, 1789, App. page 176, et seq. and the Statement (No. 1.) accompanying it, page 221.

† See Note to the following page.

BENGAL. different denominations,* two of which (Khalsa lands, and Jagheer lands) included the

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

* A description of the taxes collected under these fourteen heads will be useful, to give the reader some idea of the nature of Indian systems of revenue. They are as follows:

Mussulman administration.

Khalsa lands — Exchequer lands
Jaghire or assigned lands — Lands appropriated for the maintenance of military and other officers of Government . . . .

} The aggregate of these two constitute the whole of the lands paying revenue to the state — and the tax levied thereon is called the standard assessment.

Abwab Soubahdary, or Vice Royal Imposts.

Wojuhaut Khasnoveesy — Fees or dues to the Government writers.

Nuzzerana Moccurrery — An item introduced by Sujah Khan, being fixed pecuniary acknowledgments, paid by Zemindars for improper remissions, indulgencies, favors, and protection, forbearance from investigations of the value of land, or on being freed from the immediate superintendance of farmers; but ostensibly to defray the charge of presents sent to the Court on Mussulman festivals.

Zer Mathout — An item of Soubahdary Abwab, or cesses, established by Sujah Khan, consisting of four articles; 1st, Nuzzer poonah, or presents exacted from Zemindars by officers of the Exchequer at the festival of the annual settlement; 2nd, Bhay khelaut, or price of robes bestowed at the same time on considerable Zemindars, as tokens of investiture; 3rd, Pushta bundy, keeping up the river banks in particular places; 4th, Russoom nezarut, or commission of 10 annas per mille on the treasure

original "standard assessment." The remaining twelve were called Abwab, or viceregal imposts; and having been augmented under

brought from the interior. This Abwab formerly existed; but was rendered permanent by Sujah Khan.

Mathoot Feelkaneh—An imposition established by Sujah Khan to defray the expense of feeding elephants.

Foujdary Abwab—Assessments made by the Foujdars (criminal and police magistrates). Also a Soubahdary impost established by Sujah Khan; being in the nature of a territorial assessment, levied from the Foujdars, on the frontier districts, which were imperfectly explored, and brought into subjection to the ruling power of the state.

Chout Marhatta—The Marhattas fourth. An Abwab introduced by Aliverdi Cawn, to make up for the decrease of revenue experienced by relinquishing to the Marhattas a large portion of territory, as a commutation of the tribute long demanded by that nation from the Moghul Government.

Ahuk and Kist Gour—One of the Abwab taxes established by Ali Verdi Khan, for defraying the expense of purchasing lime at Sylhet, for the use of Government, and bricks from the ruins of the City of Gour.

Nuzzerana Munsoor Gange—A present on account of the grain market; an item of the Soubahdary Abwab, established by Ali Verdi Khan.

Keffayet—Profit resulting from the revenue investigations of Meer Cossim; being an item of the Soubahdary Abwab, or cesses, arising from Jaghires, and other lands held at reduced rates by the principal officers of Government; which were added to the public rent. Also encrease of revenue from the enquiries into the resources of the Khalsa lands.

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each successive Nazim,* or governor, constituted, at length, in Cossim Ali's time, a greater sum than the whole of the original or standard settlement.

Tumar Jumma.

The Tumar Jumma, or as it is also called Tukseem Jumma, and Assul Jumma, being often referred to in official records as a standard of high authority; and the same mode of assessing lands having been adopted, or professed to be adopted, in our revenue settlements in India; the reader should be informed of the principles on which this celebrated standard was framed.

Serf Sicca — Discount on the exchange of rupees; an item of the Soubahdary Abwab, established by Ali Verdi Khan, or by Cossim Ali Khan.

Keffayet Foujdaran — The same as Keffayet, q. v., but levied on lands appropriated for the civil and military expenses of Foujdars.

Towfeer Jaghiredaran — Increase of, or from, Jaghiredars; an item of Soubahdary Abwab, or cesses, consisting of an increase of revenue from Jaghires, appropriated to the support of troops, sometimes to military officers, and to other public individuals.

These Abwabs or taxes, being levied at the discretion of the provincial viceroys, opened a field for boundless exaction. The very names and nature of the taxes, coupled with the character of the provincial Government, sufficiently indicate the fact.

* Nazim — governor of a province, and minister of criminal justice, styled also Nawab, and Soubahdar.

In the Ayeen Akbery, or institutes of Akbar, it is stated that the lands of the empire were formerly measured, and divided into Beegahs of 3600 Ilahee square Guz* each, or supposed to be so measured and divided. The exact dimensions of the Ilahee Guz were first settled by his majesty; who next commanded that the lands should be classed under the following denominations:—

Poolej. Or land cultivated for every harvest; being never allowed to lie fallow.

Perowty. Land kept out of cultivation for a short time, that the soil may recover its strength.

Checher. Land which had lain fallow three or four years.

Bunjer. Land which had not been cultivated for five years and upwards.

* A measure, it is said, of 41 fingers, or of the breadth of 54 Iscunderees (a round silver coin adulterated with copper). The Ayeen Akbery, part iii. p. 303, mentions many different kinds of Guz. To obviate the confusion attending this multiplicity of measures, the Emperor Akbar established the above-mentioned Ilahee Guz. In another place, the Guz is stated to be equal to 24 inches; at which rate a Beegah would be about one third of an English acre. The Beegah abovementioned is by other writers called Jureeb of 60 square measures of 60 Guz each, into which the lands of a Mussulman empire, or kingdom, were pretended to be divided by actual measurement; after which, the produce and value of the land was also pretended to be ascertained, and the revenue fixed accordingly. In this Mahomedan regulation we have the foundation, and model, of later Ryotwar surveys and assessments.

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Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Tumar Jumma.

"Both of the two first mentioned kinds of "land, viz. Poolej and Perowty, are of three "sorts: best—middling—and bad. They "add together the produce of a Beegah of "each sort, and a third of that aggregate sum "is the medium produce of one Beegah of "Poolej land—one third part of which is the "revenue settled by his majesty."*

Two tables are annexed—one to shew the produce per Beegah of eleven different articles cultivated in the Poolej and Perowty lands for the spring harvest; and the other, of nineteen other articles for the Autumn harvest; with the proportion of revenue in kind payable on each article, according to the principles above laid down. That the reader may judge of the operation, in practice, of this highly celebrated mode of measuring and assessing lands, I shall here apply the rule to one article from each table. The ratios thus deduced will be equally applicable to every other article.

* Ayeen Akbery, p. 306. The same terms are used to this day to express the different descriptions of land in the upper provinces of Bengal. The rule for the division of produce is, however, somewhat different. Instead of one-third of the medium produce, as in Akbar's time, modern rulers have found it more convenient to take to themselves the produce of Politch (Poolej) lands, leaving only $\frac{2}{3}$ to the Ryot.—Vide Sec. 12. Reg. IX. of 1805.

FOR THE SPRING CROP—TAKE WHEAT.

	Maunds.	Seers.
The produce of a Beegah of the best sort of Poolej is stated, in the table, to be.....	18	0
Ditto ditto middling ditto....	12	0
Ditto ditto worst ditto....	8	35
The aggregate produce of 3 beegahs of different sorts	38	35
One third of the preceding, being the medium produce of a Beegah, is	12	38½
And one-third of the medium produce, being the proportion fixed for the revenue, is.....	4	12¾

FOR THE AUTUMN CROP—COTTON.

The produce of a Beegah of the best sort of Poolej is stated to be	10	0
Ditto ditto middling ditto....	7	20
Ditto ditto worst ditto....	5	0
Aggregate produce of 3 Beegahs of different sorts	22	20
One-third of the preceding, being the medium produce of a Beegah, is	7	20
And one-third of the medium produce, being the proportion fixed for the revenue, is.....	2	20*

In this simple application of the rule, it will be observed that the "proportion fixed for the revenue," is 50 per cent of the gross produce of

* For the Tables themselves the reader is referred to the Ayeen Akbery as above quoted. It is not thought necessary in this treatise to do more than explain the *principles* on which they are framed.

BENGAL. Revenue settlements previous to 1789. Tumar Jumma.

the worst sort of Poolej land, and about 24 per cent. only of the produce of the best sort—thus laying the most oppressive weight on the land least able to bear it. So much for the inequality of this mode of assessing lands, to say nothing of its obvious liability to error, and fraud.

A similar table is annexed for the Bunjer lands; in which the revenue is stated as gradually encreasing for four successive years, till it should reach the "standard assessment."

From Checher, the revenue was collected as follows—"the first year two fifths of the "produce—second year three fifths—third "and fourth years four fifths each*—and the "fifth year as Poolej."

"The husbandman (it is added) has his "choice to pay the revenue, either in ready "money, or by Kunkoot, or by Bhawely."† With a view to money payments, persons were expressly appointed to learn, and report, the current prices of every province in the empire. Kunkoot means an estimate by inspection of the crop while standing. Bhawely, a division of it after it is gathered.

* These I presume, are intended to express so many parts or portions of the "standard assessment," not the gross produce.

† Ayeen Akbery, Part III., p. 314.

The money rates, at which the revenue of a Beegah of Poolej land was fixed, are next particularized in Tables of nineteen years'* collection, commencing at the 6th year of Akbar's reign, (A. D. 1561) and concluding with the 24th, (A. D. 1579). These tables contain a specification of the rates of revenue, in each year of the period, on fifty different articles of produce distinguished, as before, into Spring and Autumn crops. They are said to have been constructed after the most diligent investigation; and with reference apparently to the principles above laid down.

Abul Fazel, however, informs us that this system was productive of much inconvenience, oppression, and complaint. Wherefore his majesty, to remedy these evils, ordered a settlement to be concluded for ten years; by "which resolution giving ease to the people, he "procured for himself their daily blessings."

The mode adopted was as follows:—

In each Purgunnah, or district, there was, it appears, a Canongoe; and in each village a Putwary. These officers were public accountants, whose business it was to keep regular accounts, or registers, of cultivation,

* Nineteen years is a cycle of the moon, during which period the seasons are supposed to undergo a complete revolution.

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Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Tumar Jumma.

as well as of every transaction connected therewith, in the divisions, and subdivisions of the country to which they belonged. They were paid by a per centage on the collections, or by an assignment of lands. On the occasion of framing the Tumar Jumma, the provincial Canongoes were assembled at the royal exchequer; where ten principal Canongoes were appointed under Raja Tuder Mull, and Mozeffer Khan,* to collect the accounts of the provincial officers. "Then having taken the "Tukseem Mulk, or divisions of the empire, "*they* ESTIMATED *the produce of the lands, and* "*formed a new Jumma.*"

On these grounds a decennial settlement of the revenues was framed; or rather computed. The aggregate of the collections for the last ten years of the preceding period, or from the fifteenth to the twenty-fourth year inclusive of the imperial reign, was taken as a basis; and a tenth part of that total was then fixed as the annual rate for ten years to come.

The Tumar Jumma would thus appear to have been, in the first instance, nothing more than a decennial settlement. In the second volume

* Tuder Mull, and Mozeffer Khan, were appointed financial ministers in the 15th year of Akbar's reign, or A.D. 1570.

of the Ayeen Akbery, however, we have a history of the twelve Soubahs or viceroyalties of Hindostan, in which a detail is given of the Tukseem Jumma; that is, the precise portions of revenue attaching to each village, or subdivision, of the different provinces; whence we may conclude that it continued in force after the ten years had expired; since it is often referred to as a standard of high authority.

A closer inspection therefore is necessary of the tables of nineteen years' rates, on which this Tumar, or Tukseem, Jumma is proved to have been founded. For this purpose I have extracted from the Ayeen Akbery (vol. i. part iii.) one of the tables—that for Allahabad—being the nearest to Bengal, and here subjoin it; that the reader may compare it with the remarks contained in the present treatise; judge for himself how far such complicated details are suited to the object of valuing and assessing lands; and what degree of reliance ought to be placed on statements furnished at the unchecked discretion of men, among whom integrity of conduct (such is the natural consequence of despotic rigor) is held to be either ridiculous, or a proof of imbecility.

TABLE of NINETEEN YEARS' RATES of REVENUE, collected from a

THE SPRING HARVEST OF THE SOUBAH

	6th & 7th Years.	8th Year.	9th Year.	10th Year.	11th Year.	12th Year.	13th Year.	14th Year.	15th Year.
Wheat	90	90	90	60 to 64	80 to 100	80 to 100	70	62	48 to 80
Cabul Vetches	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	38 to 50
Indian ditto	80	80	80	56 to 64	76 to 90	76 to 90	76 to 90	58 to 90	24 to 80
Barley	70	80	80	80 to 120	80	80	80	70 to 76	50 to 106
Pot herbs	80	80	80	80 to 120	80	80	70 to 86	60 to 70	44
Kooknar	160	160	160	140	140	140	110	130	100 to 130
Maneefer Flowers	½ Maund	do.	do.	70 to 80	80	80	80	76	60 to 70
Linseed	80	80	80	70 to 80	80	80	80	64	30 to 88
Mustard	80	80	80	70 to 80	80	80	80	20 to 60	30 to 80
Adess	60	60	50	40 to 54	54 to 60	54 to 60	54 to 60	42	17 to 60
Arzen	44	44	20	30	40	30 to 40	36 to 56	19 to 36	17 to 36
Peas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15 to 60	18 to 43
European Musk Melons	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	120	120 to 160
Indian ditto	10	—	—	—	10	10	10	10 to 12	12 to 16
Shalykowr	60	60	60	60	54 to 80	60	60 to 70	40 to 60	44 to 46
Ajwain	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	70 to 100
Onions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	70 to 100
Fenugreek	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	36 to 70
Carrots	1 Maund	do.	do.	do.	do.	do.	do.	do.	24 to 30
Keyu	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	24

THE AUTUMN HARVEST OF THE SOUBAH

	6th & 7th Yrs.	8th Year.	9th Year.	10th Year.	11th Year.	12th Year.	13th Year.	14th Year.	15th Year.
Sugar Cane called Powndeh	—	—	—	—	200	200	200	200	200
Common Sugar Cane	180	180	180	160	180	180	180	170 to 180	174 to 180
Shaly Muslikeen	—	—	—	80	80	80	80	80	36 to 100
Common Rice	70	70	70	60	80 to 90	80 to 90	70	48	36 to 80
Shaly Moonjee	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	48
Cotton	120	120	130	110	120	120	120	96	90 to 120
Potherbs	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	70
Sesame Seed	60	60	80	70	80	80	80	64	50 to 100
Mowth	48	48	54	44	54 to 70	50	50	36	22 to 60
Mash	48	48	54	44	54 to 70	50	48	36	28 to 70
Mowng	48	48	48	44	44	44	44	44	32 to 72
Jewar	50	50	60	48	60	48	48	40	26
Lehdereh	48	48	48	44	50 to 56	50 to 56	50 to 56	40 to 56	20
Lubya	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Koderem	44	44	44	44	44 to 64	54 to 64	54 to 64	36	22 to 60
Korey	40	40	50	24	30	30	30	20	10
Shamakh	36	36	50	30	36	54	36 to 54	30	30
Gall	44	44	50	40	50 to 56	50 to 56	50 to 56	28	13 to 44
Arzen	44	44	50	40	40	40	40	36	20 to 36
Mundeweh	46	46	50	40	40	52 to 56	52 to 56	34	22 to 56
Indigo	140	140	160	140	140	140	140	136	150 to 160
Hemp	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	78	70 to 120
Tareyeh	80	80	80	—	—	—	—	—	30 to 80
Turmeric	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	100
Cutchalu	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	70
Kulet	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20
Henna	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	58
Water Melons	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10 to 12
Pan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	180
Singhareh	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	100
Arbee	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Beegah of Poolej Land, calculated in Dams; of which 40=1 Rupee.

OF ALLAHABAD—NINETEEN YEARS' RATES.

16th Year.	17th Year.	18th Year.	19th Year.	20th Year.	21st Year.	22nd Year.	23rd Year.	24th Year.
42 to 100	42 to 100	48 to 70	40 to 70	42½ to 62½	48 to 86	62½ to 86	40 to 62	40 to 75
50	50	50	50	33 to 50	—	36 to 75	26 to 75	40 to 63
13 to 40	32 to 45	20 to 45	20 to 45	30 to 74	43 to 57	33 to 50	22 to 44	24 to 43
50 to 100	50 to 100	40 to 100	40 to 100	49 to 100	44 to 60	46 to 60	43 to 60	37 to 60
28 to 70	32 to 50	30 to 50	21 to 50	22 to 50	22 to 47	45 to 83	38 to 56	24 to 56
100 to 130	100 to 130	100 to 130	100 to 130	100 to 130	100 to 130	100 to 130	100 to 130	100 to 130
60 to 70	60 to 70	52 to 70	50 to 70	43 to 70	56 to 70	56 to 70	56 to 70	56 to 70
26 to 64	30 to 64	18 to 64	20 to 64	22 to 31	23 to 28	20 to 27	18 to 22	18 to 24
26 to 44	26 to 44	22 to 44	24 to 44	25 to 43	26 to 46	28 to 36	22 to 30	22 to 44
18 to 40	24 to 40	15 to 40	15 to 40	18 to 43	24 to 36	21 to 35	25 to 28	17 to 38
17 to 36	14 to 36	16 to 36	16 to 23	14 to 23	16 to 23	14 to 23	14 to 23	14 to 30
17 to 40	14 to 40	15 to 40	17 to 34	17 to 44	18 to 44	18 to 44	17 to 28	18 to 41
120 to 160	120 to 160	80 to 160	66 to 160	43 to 160	86 to 120	86 to 120	86 to 120	86 to 120
12 to 16	12 to 16	8 to 16	9 to 16	12 to 42	12 to 16	12 to 16	12 to 16	12 to 16
40 to 48	40 to 48	36 to 46	38 to 46	22 to 42	36 to 42	32 to 42	40 to 42	40 to 50
70 to 100	70 to 80	60 to 100	52 to 100	52 to 70	52 to 73	70 to 73	52 to 73	52 to 73
70 to 100	70 to 100	70 to 100	70 to 100	70 to 76	62 to 76	72 to 76	72 to 76	70 to 95
36 to 70	36 to 70	36 to 70	36 to 70	50 to 73	52 to 82	52 to 72	28 to 80	40 to 80
24 to 30	24 to 34	23 to 40	20 to 40	20 to 39	20 to 26	20 to 25	14 to 25	16 to 24
24	24	24	25	25	25	25	16	25

OF ALLAHABAD—NINETEEN YEARS' RATES.

16th Year.	17th Year.	18th Year.	19th Year.	20th Year.	21st Year.	22nd Year.	23rd Year.	24th Year.
200	200	200	170 to 200	160 to 200	180 to 200	180 to 200	180 to 200	180 to 200
100 to 144	86 to 110	100 to 120	100 to 130	86 to 134	86 to 165	86 to 170	76 to 170	70 to 126
56 to 76	56 to 76	56 to 76	50 to 76	54 to 78	49 to 77	49 to 77	56 to 76	36 to 76
36 to 50	30 to 58	34 to 58	37 to 57	37 to 58	42 to 59	40 to 50	36 to 44	30 to 61
48	48	48	48	60	44	65	65	65
90 to 120	70 to 120	70 to 120	70 to 120	70 to 120	70 to 123	80 to 102	70 to 102	50 to 70
70 to 100	60 to 100	50 to 100	50 to 100	60 to 94	60 to 94	60 to 94	60 to 86	60 to 99
30 to 50	39 to 40	28 to 40	28 to 40	26 to 38	22 to 32	24 to 32	24 to 52	24 to 46
29 to 46	22 to 46	20 to 46	18 to 46	13 to 30	22 to 28	16 to 20	16 to 27	16 to 38
28 to 42	28 to 42	22 to 42	25 to 42	27 to 44	21 to 44	21 to 40	24 to 45	24 to 45
32 to 46	32 to 46	30 to 46	38 to 46	32 to 48	28 to 56	34 to 56	30 to 50	26 to 56
26	26	26 to 28	22 to 26	29 to 46	22 to 54	30 to 54	32 to 40	24 to 44
20	20	20 to 22	16 to 40	20 to 48	20 to 48	20 to 48	24 to 40	23 to 61
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
21 to 33	20 to 44	20 to 22	16 to 36	21 to 38	26 to 48	31 to 48	22 to 30	21 to 39
10	10	10	7 to 22	7 to 14	7 to 14	7 to 14	10	7 to 14
20	10 to 40	10 to 22	10 to 22	7 to 22	8 to 22	7 to 14	10 to 18	7 to 17
13 to 24	13 to 24	10 to 24	8 to 24	10 to 21	11 to 23	15 to 23	14 to 24	12 to 22
20 to 36	20 to 36	20 to 36	18 to 36	20 to 38	14 to 28	14 to 28	14 to 28	14 to 30
22 to 29	22 to 29	17 to 29	13 to 29	19 to 39	25 to 32	25 to 32	22 to 28	18 to 28
130 to 160	120 to 180	130 to 160	130 to 180	132 to 140	132 to 140	132 to 140	132 to 140	132 to 160
70 to 80	70 to 80	76 to 80	76 to 80	60 to 88	60 to 90	80	80	80
32 to 44	32 to 44	24 to 44	24 to 44	32 to 40	26 to 40	26 to 40	26 to 40	26 to 40
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
70	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
36	36	36	36	24	24	24	18	29
58	58	58	58	60 to 80	60 to 80	60 to 80	60 to 80	60 to 80
10 to 12	10 to 12	10 to 12	12 to 19	10 to 14	10 to 15	10 to 14	10 to 14	10 to 14
180	180	180	180	160	200	200	240	240
—	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
—	—	—	—	20	20	20	20	20

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One would think that the bare inspection of this table was sufficient to carry conviction of the futility of any attempt, by ordinary surveyors and assessors, to impose just and equal rates on such a variety of products; all differing in value; liable also to differences from the degrees of skill and industry employed, and the various descriptions of land on which they are raised. Yet these are the accounts on which Tumar Jummas, and Ryotwar settlements, are founded. This, indeed, may be taken as a fair specimen of an Indian revenue account. It professes, as the reader will perceive, to exhibit perfect order and precision; but it is open to the following further objections.

For the first nine years, or up to the fourteenth inclusive, there is little variation in the annual rates. They are mostly a fixed sum, on each article. Take sugar cane, for an example, rated at 180 dams per Beegah; which is the rate fixed for the whole province. Now if this rate be the result of classifying, and assessing Poolej land according to the rule laid down in *page* **300**, it implies that all the lands of the viceroyalty 270 miles long, by 120 broad (Hamilton) are, or may be equally divided into best, middling, and worst, sorts; which is evidently impossible. This tax, like all the others for the same period, must therefore have been arbi-

trarily imposed; and unequal in its bearing, on the various qualities, and situations of land.*

* To render this more intelligible, let us suppose, according to the rule for classifying and assessing Poolej land, that a Ryot had three Beegahs of land; of which the value is as follows:—

Best sort	720 Dams.
Middling ditto.....	540
Worst ditto	360
Total produce....	1620

Of which one third is taken for the medium produce, or 540

And one third of the medium produce for revenue, or ..... 180 Dams.

But in so large an extent of country, where the quality of the soil must be almost infinitely diversified; let us suppose another Ryot to be possessed only of the middling and worst sorts of land, his account would then stand thus:—

Produce of one Beegah of middling Poolej land	540 Dams.
Ditto of two ditto worst ditto.....	720
Total produce....	1260

Of which one third for medium produce, or 420

And one third of the medium produce for revenue, or ..... 140 Dams.

Other varieties of soil and produce, would give still wider results; whence it appears that an uniform rate per Beegah, would fall very unequally on different Ryots; and that what

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From the fifteenth to the twenty-fourth years inclusive, the rates vary considerably. Tuder Mull and Mozeffer Khan were at this time financial ministers; and from the enquiries prosecuted by them into the revenues, with a view to the formation of the Tumar Jumma, it is not improbable the Canongoes may have been desirous of evincing signs of diligence and accuracy, by exhibiting more detailed accounts of the revenues of each district; or the figures contained in the ten last columns may represent the amount of the actual collections. In this respect the Ayeen Akbery leaves us in doubt; for whilst it avows the Tumar Jumma to have been founded on these ten years' collections, it admits the first five to have been made "on the representations "of men of integrity; and moreover that "during this period the harvests were un-"commonly plentiful."* We may therefore

might be a moderate tax in one instance would be most oppressive in another.

The observant reader will also perceive that these taxes are laid on *gross produce*, and have no reference to the cost of production, which is always greater in poor than in rich soils. If —for the sake of illustration— it should cost 200 Dams to raise the 540 Dams worth of produce in the first of the above cases, and 250 to raise the 420 Dams worth in the second, it is obvious that an uniform tax of 180 Dams on the *gross produce* of both these lands would be still more unequal and unjust

* Ayeen Akbery, Part III., p. 316.

conclude the whole of these rates also to be as arbitrarily imposed as the former nine; and though lowered in some instances below the former rate, they will be found to equal, and even exceed, the amount in others.

In the latter part of the table indeed, numerous articles of produce are stated, which would seem to have been wholly exempted from taxation for the first nine years; but subject—some of them—to the heaviest duties of the whole table for the remaining ten; wherefore we may be allowed to presume that this was not the part of the arrangement for which Akbar, giving ease to his subjects, received their daily blessings.

But besides the classification of the lands into "best, middling, and worst sort," which of itself, opens a wide field to error and fraud; it will be further observed, of the preceding table, that it contains, as above stated, fifty different articles of produce; all differing in value; and consequently assessed to the revenue, at rates varying from 7 to 240 dams per Beegah, with forty-eight intermediate rates. If then we could suppose the Canongoe's register to be correct at any given time, it could not long continue so. Ryots would frequently find it advantageous to change the cultivation of one product for another; or they might take waste lands into cultivation,

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or old spots might be abandoned. In all these cases if the system of check and controul were so complete that a Ryot could do neither one, nor the other, without a previous reference to the Canongoe, and the principal authorities of the district, the labour of procuring their sanction, the delay of awaiting the Canongoes' convenience, and the bribes or fees to be paid for official concurrence in the change, would be felt as an intolerable grievance. Innumerable changes therefore, of this description must have occurred continually, either unknown to the local authorities, or with their collusive sanction; so that the necessary alterations never were, and in most cases never could be, made in the Canongoes' accounts.

But it is certain that these fifty products, even if they could be accurately assessed, would be classed in the first instance, as favour, influence, fear, or bribery might dictate —in other words, that fields of 7, 20, 50, or 60 dams would be written in account, where products of 100, 150, or 200 dams were actually cultivated, and *vice versâ*. Hence it is, that Canongoes' accounts have always been found on examination, to be complete fabrications, or mere conjectural estimates. The conclusion here drawn would be natural enough, from what we know of the abuses

and corruptions committed in far more civilized communities, where the actions of men are not under efficient controul; but in India it is so fully attested by authorities, which might be quoted, from Abul Fazel himself, down to the best and most experienced of our own revenue servants, as to leave it now an undisputed fact.

Of the decennial settlement Abul Fazel says, that it was "somewhat less than the "former one." How much is not stated; but we are left to form no favourable conjecture of the "former one," when we are told by the same authority, that what was exacted by Sheer Khan "*exceeded the present produce* "*of lands;*" on which account it further appears that "there had hitherto been a wide "difference between the settlements and the "receipts"—in other words, large outstanding and irrecoverable balances.

The duties on manufactures called Jehat, which used to be ten per cent, were reduced by Akbar to five per cent.

Abul Fazel further informs us, that "His "Majesty, whose bounty is boundless as the "sea, remitted a variety of vexatious taxes, "*which used to equal the quit rent of Hindos-*"*tan.*" If by this last expression is meant the Tumar Jumma, their aggregate amount could be no trifle. The remitted taxes are

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called by Abul Fazel, Seyerjehat.* A list is subjoined for the reader's inspection,† to shew of what items an Indian revenue assessment commonly consists.

Tumar Jumma.

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* Abul Fazel explains the revenue terms here used, as follows. "Summarily, the quit rent is called Mal — the tax "on manufactures Jehat — and all other imposts are in general "named Syerjehat."

† *List of Taxes said to be remitted.*

"Jesyeh—Capitation tax paid by the Hindoos.
"Meer Behry—Port duties.
"Kerrea—An exaction from each person of a multitude assembled to perform any religious ceremony.
"Gawshemary—Tax on oxen.
"Sirderukhty—Tax on every tree.
"Peishcush—Presents.
"Feruk Aksam Peesheh—Poll tax collected from every workman.
"Daroghaneh, (police officer.)
"Tesseeldary, (subordinate collector.)
"Fotedary, (money-trier.)
} Taxes made for those officers of government.
"Wejeh Keryeh—Lodging charges for the above officers.
"Kheryteh—For money bags.
"Serafy—For trying and exchanging money.
"Hassil Bazar—Market duties.
"Nekass—Tax on the sale of cattle, together with taxes on the following articles: hemp, blankets, oil, and raw hides. There were likewise taxes on measuring, and weighing, and for killing cattle, dressing hides, playing at dice, and sawing timber; Likewise,
"Rahdary—or passport.
"Pug—a kind of poll tax.

That these taxes were actually remitted during Akbar's reign may be believed by those who can place faith in miracles, and think despotism the most forbearing of human governments; but with every allowance for the elevation of Akbar's mind, compared with the rest of his race; when we reflect on the incidents of his reign—the little controul he had over his Viceroys, with whom he was in a continual state of war, the character of the people, and, more especially, of the local officers in power,—we may, as to the reality of this boasted remission, much more safely exclaim with the Roman Poet "*Credat Judæus Appella, non ego.*"

Tumar Jumma.

Whether the Seyerjehat duties were, or were not, remitted in Akbar's time is, however, of

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" Hearth money.
" A tax on both the buyer and the seller of a house.
" Ditto, on salt made from earth.
" Bilkutty—or permission to reap the harvest for which some-
" thing was exacted.
" Tax on putty (nemed)—Felt.
" Tax on lime.
" Tax on spirituous liquors.
" Tax on brokerage.
" Tax on fishermen.
" Tax on storax.
" In short, all those articles which the natives of Hindostan
" comprehend under the description of Seyerjehat."

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no consequence to this inquiry. Even if remitted, they were re-established afterwards, or taxes of the same import: for many of them are found, though under different names, included in the above-mentioned Abwabs of Akbar's successors; and constituted so objectionable and oppressive a source of exaction, in later times, as to cause their abolition by Lord Cornwallis in 1789.

Finally, we are informed that in Bengal, the attempt to enforce Akbar's new financial system—which "giving ease to the people, procured for him their daily blessings"—occasioned so formidable an insurrection of the Jaghiredars of that, and the neighbouring, province of Behar, as to endanger the stability of the imperial throne. Mozeffer Khan, one of the framers of the system, was then Governor of Bengal, and, in attempting to suppress the insurrection, was overpowered. He was besieged in the fort of Tondah; obliged to surrender; and afterwards murdered by the rebels. The Raja Tuder Mull was then appointed his successor. He obtained some partial successes against the rebels, but accomplished nothing of importance; and was ultimately superseded.*

* Stewart's Hist. Beng. pp. 166 to 175.

As far therefore as can be learnt from history, it does not appear that this highly extolled system ever was carried into effect in Bengal. We might perhaps further assert, that it never was carried into effect anywhere; and that its existence was chiefly, if not wholly, confined to the books of Tuder Mull and his Canongoes.*

The preceding particulars of the Tumar

* I must observe, in regard to the events mentioned in the text connected with the Tumar Jumma, that there is an apparent discrepancy as to dates which may need explanation. From Mr. Shore's Min. June 1789, it would seem that the Tumar Jumma of Turymull was framed, or only introduced into Bengal, in 1582; but this was clearly not the year of its formation; for according to Major Stewart, Mozeffer Khan was murdered in 1580; and Tuder Mull, who succeeded to the Government, and failed in his attempts to reduce the country to submission, was superseded in 1582, by the appointment of Khan Aazim. The Tumar Jumma, therefore, could only have been acted upon in Bengal, if at all, after that province, and Behar, had completely submitted to Akbar's arms. It may be inferred from the Ayeen Akbery that the Tumar Jumma was framed by Mozeffer Khan and Tuder Mull, about the year 1578 or 79. Mr. Shore however admits, (par. 464), that although the "Tukseem (divisions or constituent parts of the "Tumar Jumma) of Turymull, was adhered to for a long "period, and well adapted to the circumstances of the coun- "try, and the name still kept up; there is reason to "suppose that long before our accession to the Dewanny, a "new Tukseem (a worthy scion no doubt of the old stock) had "in fact taken place"; adding in par. 515, "*It is at the*

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Jumma are chiefly taken from the Ayeen Akbery, Vol. i. pp. 299, to 374, and the tables therein given.

Mussulman administration.

Of the Mahomedan financial system there is a more precise account given in a valuable work, entitled "Observations on the Law and "Constitution of India," in which the law itself is given as explained, and illustrated, by its most orthodox commentators. We hence

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"*same time acknowledged to be partial, incorrect, and often* "*inapplicable to the present state of things.*"

Of the rebellion above noticed in Bengal and Behar, it may not be irrelevant here to add, that when we reflect on all the occurrences of Akbar's reign, the never-ending warfare, insurrections, treasons and conspiracies, with which he had to contend, it is impossible to conceive that any thing like the established order of law, and civil government, could exist in any part of his extensive dominions. Akbar, like Charlemagne in the West, was the ablest barbarian of his day. By superior talent, or superior bravery, he conquered, and retained all the provinces of the Moghul empire — as intimated in the imperfect sketch of his reign given in Part II.; and he thus attained the distinction of a great name, because he was the most gifted, or the most fortunate, of his contemporaries; and because his victories were not always stained with the cruelties and severities common to the times. His military exploits alone were sufficient, in the days in which he lived, to raise his reputation to the highest pitch of worldly glory; and we all know, even in modern times, how slender appearances of generosity or kindness in great characters, and in princes more particularly, are apt to be blazoned forth as proofs of the most exalted magnanimity and virtue.

learn that a Mussulman conqueror is authorized " by law," to carry into captivity and reduce to slavery, the " infidel " inhabitants of a conquered country, like India; *that every right and interest which the conquered inhabitants before possessed, ceases and determines by the very act of conquest;* that the former inhabitants may consequently be removed, and another people placed in their room at the will of the conqueror; but that the old inhabitants may be suffered to remain " under the " conditions required by law," which are the payment of Khurauj or land tax, and the Jusyeh or capitation tax; for the discharge of which, or at least the former, the land is held answerable; and the actual property of the soil vested, or established, in its actual cultivators. The sources of Mussulman revenue are thus stated to be—

1st. The Khurauj — explained to be one-half the gross produce of land; in some instances less. The best description, however, of this impost is given by the great lawyer Shumsul Aymah Surukhsee, who says, " There shall be left for every one who culti- " vates his land, as much as he requires for " his own support, till the next crop be reaped, " and that of his family, and for seed. *This* " *much* (miserable pittance!) *shall be left him;*

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"what remains is Khurauj, and shall go to the "public treasury."*

2nd. The Jusyeh—or capitation tax, particularly attaching to non-Moslem or infidel subjects, and as some have it, "an equivalent "for sparing their lives," amounted to 48 Dirhems† yearly, on the wealthy class; 24 on the middling; and 12 Dirhems on the lower classes; and yielded, according to the author's computation, about ten millions sterling, from the Moghul empire in India, or a 12th part of the whole land revenue.

3rd. The third source of Mussulman revenue was tribute from tributary tribes or states. This was settled by convention, and was always arbitrary.

4th. Oosher-ut-tujaurut—customs, or tithe, on merchandize in transit, levied at the rate of 2½ per cent. on a Moslem; 5 per cent. on a Zimmee (infidel subject); and 10 per cent on a Hurbee, or subject of a foreign state.

5th. Zukaut—or tax on brood cattle; that is, on camels, kine, horses, sheep and goats; it is payable only by Mussulmans, and the object of it "purification."

6th. Zukaut—a tax of 2½ per cent. on gold and silver bullion, ornaments, and plate made

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* Obs. p. 34. † A Dirhem is equal in value to about 9½d.

of the precious metals; also on merchandize not in transit; stock in trade; every thing, in short, yielding a profit or increase, was liable to this tax.

7th. Sudukut ul Fetz—alms at the Eed (festival) of Fetz. Every Moslem, male and female, sane and of age, and possessed of 200 Dirhems of property, besides his house, furniture, apparel, &c. is liable to this tax.

8th. Khooms—a fifth; or a fifth part of prize or plunder taken in war, of the produce of metal mines, of treasure trove, and wrecks; which fifth was always required to be sent to the imperial exchequer.

9th. Escheats—property without legal heirs escheated to the crown. These were of frequent occurrence.

10th. War tax—"The war tax might be "made, and no doubt was made, a fruitful "source of exaction in India, as the occasion "for such exaction could seldom be wanting."

These are stated to be the *legitimate* sources of revenue under a Moslem government; but *de facto*, other imposts existed in India, of which a list is above given (*pp.* **314** to **315**); and further confirmed by the author here referred to.* We may therefore conclude that the *legitimate* sources of revenue constituted

* Observations on the Law and Constitution of India, p. 117.

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the Jumma which was annually remitted to the Khalsa or imperial exchequer; whilst the viceregal Abwabs, and other imposts, enumerated in preceding pages, went to enrich the viceroys and other subordinate officers of the state, at whose mercy, and discretion, apparently, they were left to be collected.

Of the Khurauj it is added, that it was collected in money on green crops, at the rate of 5 Dirhems per Beegah, and on dry crops, one-third of the average produce, as before explained from the Ayeen Akbery. A wheat-field paid a Kufeez (about 19lbs.) in wheat, and a Dirhem in money, per Beegah; a vineyard 10 Dirhems; and so on. When Ryots changed their cultivation from less to more valuable crops, they were required to pay the higher rates; and always to pay the Khurauj, though the land were left uncultivated; because (it is added) they had the power of cultivating if they chose.*

In this enumeration of taxes we have a specimen of the practical operation of Mussulman law, as applied to conquered infidels. Although the Hedaya † and other commentaries, state the rate of taxation in general terms, to be one-half, or one-third, the gross produce

* This rule will be found to have been adopted into later Ryotwar Settlements. Vide infrà.

† Vide *p.* 281.

of land, or a supposed equivalent in money, yet the rule given by Aymah Surukhsee accorded best with the actual practice, which was to exact from infidel Ryots, whose lives and liberties were thus ransomed, the utmost that could be levied from the produce of their annual labours, without drying up the sources of future supplies. And this appears to be in conformity with the spirit of the Koran itself, in the 8th chapter of which it is stated,* that the spoils taken in war, (in which it is expressly admitted that lands and immoveable possessions are equally included) † are the gain of the captors, with the exception of one-fifth part, which "belongeth "unto God and the Apostle, and his kindred, "and the orphans, and the poor, and the tra-"veller"; the other four-fifths being equally divided: —a law which was afterwards modified, in chap. 59, by the Apostle reserving to himself the entire disposition of captured property,‡ that it may not be, as he observes, "for ever divided in a circle among such of "you as are rich. What the Apostle shall "give you, that accept, and what he shall

* Sale's Koran, Vol. i. p. 207. † Ibid. Vol. i. p. 201.
‡ Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 424.

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" forbid you, that abstain from; and fear " God: for God is severe in chastising"; and this, it is added, became the rule for the future.*

Mussulman administration.

* In Mr. Sale's preliminary discourse to the translation of the Koran, he gives the following view of the Mahomedan law of war. " While Mahommedism was in its infancy, the " opposers thereof taken in battle were doomed to death with- " out mercy; but this was deemed too severe to be put in " practice, when that religion came to be sufficiently esta- " blished, and past the danger of being subverted by its " enemies. - - - - - - - When the Mahommedans declare war " against people of a different faith, they give them their " choice of three offers, viz. either to embrace Mahommedism, " in which case they become not only secure in their persons, " families, and fortunes, but entitled to all the privileges of " other Moslems; or to submit, and pay tribute, by doing " which they were allowed to profess their own religion, pro- " vided it be not gross idolatry, or against the moral law; or " else to decide the quarrel by the sword, in which last case " if the Moslems prevail, the women and children which are " made captives become absolute slaves, and the men taken " in the battle may either be slain, unless they turn Mahom- " medans, or otherwise disposed of at the pleasure of the " prince."—(Sale's Koran Prelim. Disc. p. 197.)

Since the persons and lives of conquered infidels were thus at the disposal of their merciless victors, it follows, as a natural consequence, that the " spoils of war" (which every commentator interprets to include territory, and all immoveable as well as moveable property) should be equally so; wherefore it is so pronounced in the Hedaya, (*Vide p.* 281). Another learned commentator, Malec Ebn Ans, in like manner declares " the whole to be at the disposition of the Imaum, or

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Mussulman administration.

This law will be further noticed hereafter. The object here is merely to show the origin as well as the operation of Mahomedan principles of finance, in which I am the more particular, *because, as will be seen presently, their system of revenue administration was continued, without alteration, by the British Government, on our succeeding to the possession of territory in India.*

Of the Tumar Jumma, however, it should be kept in mind, that it professed to be an actual and correct admeasurement of all the lands of the empire, cultivated, and uncultivated; and of the quantity, as well as money value of the produce of every separate field, or Beegah. It may, therefore, be considered as an attempt, on the part of Akbar and his ministers, to methodize the Khurauj (land revenue), or to reduce the collection of it to fixed principles.

Mr. Shore, now Lord Teignmouth, in a very able minute annexed to the fifth Report, considers the Tumar Jumma to be founded on a "knowledge (by which I presume he means "an ascertainment) of the real existing re-

"prince, who may distribute the same at his own discretion." (Sale's Disc. p. 200.)

As far, therefore, as regards the financial principles of Mussulman rulers, they would thus seem to be deduced from as sanguinary a law as ever tyrant dared to promulgate.

BENGAL. Revenue settlements previous to 1789. Mussulman administration.

"sources." I have given my reasons for entertaining a different belief—for believing in fact, any such *ascertainment*—with the least accuracy or justice, in such extents of country as Hindostan and the Deccan—to be utterly impossible.

Mr. Shore also speaks of the Tumar Jumma as "calculated to give the sovereign a pro-"portion of the advantages arising from "extended cultivation, and increased popu-"lation;" and this is a principle which our most eminent collectors in India have always thought, and to this day conceive to be, not only equitable in itself, but perfectly consistent with the best theory of taxation. With the exception, therefore, of Lord Cornwallis' settlement, and others arising out of it, this principle will be found to pervade all our revenue settlements; the object being, that the Company's revenue should either annually, or at longer intervals, increase in quantity and value, like tythes in England, with every improvement in the cultivation or produce of land. Nothing, however, can be more obvious, than that the principle, when carried into effect in a country like India—where the government portion of the produce is always the lion's share—where the power of men in office is discretionary, and the system itself highly complicated—must necessarily

be a source of incalculable oppression, imposition, and error.

But even admitting that increasing revenue could always be unobjectionally drawn from extended cultivation over fresh lands, it is still of importance to remark that the Abwabs * were of a totally different character. These were real additions to existing burthens, being levied on the fixed rates of the Assul Jumma,* in certain proportions to its amount. These additions are said to have equalled 50 per cent. of the Assul in 1658, † and to have more than doubled that amount (vide p. **298**) by Cossim Ali Khan's settlement in 1763. *And it is the aggregate sum thus realized from the country;* viz. *the Assul and the Abwabs united, which constituted the standard we adopted for our own collections, on succeeding to the Mussulman possessions.*

Whatever, therefore, may be thought of the Tumar Jumma; no difference of opinion exists

* Assul Jumma—original standard assessment. Abwabs—cesses or imposts subsequently added.

† The impositions of Jaffier Cawn, of Sujah Khan, and of Aliverdi Khan, amounted to 33 per cent on the Tumar or standard assessment of 1658; and those of the Zemindars on the Ryots could not be less (Mr. Shore thinks) than 50 per cent.; for "exclusive of what they collected for the Nazims, "a fund was required for their subsistence and emolument, "which they of course exacted." Mr. Shore's Minute, Appendix, 5th Report, p. 173.

BENGAL. Revenue settlements previous to 1789. Mussulman administration.

as to the additions made to it by successive Nazims* under the denomination of Abwabs. Mr. Shore speaks of them as unconstitutional, and liable to the greatest abuses. Of the addition imposed by Jaffier Cawn, Mr. Shore observes "that it was obtained by "measures of the greatest severity—the Ze- "mindars with few, if any exceptions, were "dispossessed of all management in the collec- "tions, and his (Jaffier Khan) own officers "were employed to scrutinize the lands and "their produce. The severities inflicted on "renters in arrears, and upon the Zemindars, "to compel them to a discovery of their re- "sources, were disgraceful to humanity; and "as if personal indignities and torture were "not sufficient, the grossest insults were of- "fered to the religion of the people. Pits "filled with ordure, and all impurities, were "used as prisons for the Zemindars, and "these were dignified with the appellation "of Bykont, the Hindoo Paradise. Jaffier "Khan is also said to have compelled de- "faulting Zemindars, with their wives and "children to turn Mahomedans. Such was "the man whom Mahomedan annalists have "praised for justice and wisdom—such were

* Nazim—Governor of a province and minister of criminal justice.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Mussulman administration.

" the acts of an administration which, in the " language of Mr. Grant, opened *a new and* " *illustrious era of finance.*" *

Although the Nazims imposed these Abwabs (or cesses) on the Zemindars, on the supposition that the latter collected from the Ryots large sums on their own account, in addition to the standard assessment, and in the view of participating in these secret emoluments, the result was nevertheless an increased pressure on the defenceless cultivator. In a system so loosely administered, and where from the multiplicity of inferior agents, efficient controul was altogether impracticable, the Zemindars, left to their own discretion, instead of surrendering any portion of their own profits, invariably made new demands on the Ryots in proportion to the extra burdens imposed on themselves.

Down to the time of Sujah Khan, or till 1728, the Abwabs had been consolidated with the original, or Tumar, Jumma. What the Zemindars had levied under former Nazims, a succeeding Nazim would perpetuate; so that a new standard was thus assumed for every successive imposition. " General informa- " tion, or merely the supposition of existing

* Mr. Shore's Minute, Appendix, 5th Report, p. 171.

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"profits, were adopted as the grounds for "these impositions—a presumption derived "from the payment of one tax, was sufficient "to authorize the demand for another."*

Mussulman administration.

Notwithstanding all this, Mr. Shore hesitates to pronounce whether the increased exactions, up to the close of Ali Verdi's administration in 1755, were oppressive or not. This hesitation is the more surprizing, as he adds in the very same paragraph; "but nothing "can be more evident than that the mode of "imposition was fundamentally ruinous, both "to the Ryots and Zemindars; and that the "direct tendency of it was to force the latter "into extortions, and all into fraud, conceal- "ment, and distress."*

The severity of Cossim Ali's assessment was quite intolerable. Mr. Shore calls it "mere pillage and rack rent," and so far from admitting it to be any proof of the capacity of the country, he unreservedly condemns it as downright violence and exaction, which rendered subsequent decay inevitable. Cossim Ali, in fact, attempted to realize all that the Ryots paid; to abolish every gradation of subjects between the government, its rapacious tax gatherers, and overawing military

* Vide Mr. Shore's Minute, 5th Report, p. 173.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

on the one hand, and the miserable cultivators on the other; and even in some instances, to deprive the latter of the portion allotted for their subsistence.

Mussulman administration.

In proof of these revenue settlements being nothing better than arbitrary impositions and estimates, Mr. Shore states his own examination of the accounts of the farmers of the Dinagepoor, and Rungpoor districts, and gives the result as a fair specimen of Cossim Ali's general proceedings. A fuller confirmation of what is before stated respecting assessors, and native collectors, and the fabrication of accounts, cannot be desired. Suffice it to say, that the farmers of both districts failed in their engagements, notwithstanding great severities practised on the Ryots; and leaving very heavy balances of revenue unrecovered. Of Dinagepoor, Mr. Shore observes, "the farmer exerted himself to the utmost; every "source of revenue was explored, and nothing "discovered remained unappropriated. I have "examined the particulars of his collections; "and exhibited a list of petty articles, *ex-* "*ceeding* 200, *in their very nature extortionate* "*and oppressive, and such as neither could nor* "*ought to become sources of revenue.*" *

* Mr. Shore's Minute, Appendix, 5th Report, p. 175.

BENGAL. Revenue settlements previous to 1789. Mussulman administration.

Owing to the exorbitance of Cossim Ali's settlement in 1762-3 not one half of it was realized; so that in 1763-4 it was necessarily reduced by Meer Jaffier, under the administration of Nuncomar, to a gross settlement of ..... Rupees. 17,704,766

And in 1765-6, the first year of the Company's possession, it was further reduced by Mahomed Reza Khan, the Naib Subah, or Deputy Soubahdar, on the part of the Company to 16,029,011

It is a remarkable feature of these settlements, and no small proof of their grievous pressure, that, of the Jummas of Cossim Ali, Nundcomar, and Mahomed Reza Khan, or from 1762-3 to 1765-6, and amounting in the aggregate to 75,550,367 rupees, only 36,955,013 rupees were collected; leaving a "balance uncollected" of 38,595,354 rupees.

This, then, was the state of the revenue administration of the Bengal provinces at the time of their coming into the possession of the British government; in which year the *gross* settlement was fixed as above stated by Mahomed Reza Khan, including customs and salt duties, at 16,029,011 rupees.

In order to compare this with the ultimate Zemindary settlement, which will be noticed

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

hereafter; it may be here added, that the

	Rupees.
net settlement of 1765-6, was ...	15,048,333
But in 1786-7 we have for the *net* settlement of the *land revenue* only of the Dewanny provinces*	14,536,338
And adding thereto Burdwan, Midnapoor, and other districts possessed by the Company, the total *net land revenue* of Bengal amounted in 1786-7 to†	25,727,206

But before proceeding to the Zemindary settlement, it will be right to give a concise account of the Company's administration of these provinces in the intermediate period.

SECTION III.

DEWANNY GRANT—COMPANY'S ADMINISTRATION.

Dewanny grant A. D. 1765.

The Dewanny‡ of Bengal, Bahar and Orissa, was conferred in perpetuity, on the

* This is exclusive of customs and salt duties, which are included in the former taxes. If these were added, it would show an excess of 778,534 S. rupees, over the revenue of 1765.

† Appendix, 5th Report, p. 229.

‡ Dewan—Principal financial minister in the provinces under the Moghul government, and chief justice in civil causes. Dewanny—the office or jurisdiction of a Dewan.

BENGAL. Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

East India Company, by a separate grant for each province from the Moghul Shah Allum, dated 12th August, 1765.

Dewanny grant A. D. 1765.

In the imperial Firmaun* for Bengal, it is styled "*the office* of the Dewannee of the "Khalsa Shereefa of the province of Bengal, "the Paradise of the Earth." How far it proved a paradise to its inhabitants, will be seen in the sequel.

But the terms of the Firmaun are of importance to be considered in treating of the rights of sovereignty, as well as the universal right of property in the soil; both of which have been so unreservedly exercised by the Company, and their servants, and often with reference, for authority and sanction, to this very grant.

Now the Firmaun clearly bestows on the Company, nothing more than the *office* of Dewan, as a "free gift and Altumgha, with-"out the association of any other person," and with liberty to appropriate the revenues to their own use; reserving only 26 lacks of rupees per annum for the use of the Emperor Shah Allum, as before intimated in Part II., p. **219**; adding, that the said *office* is to be left in possession of the Company from generation to generation, for ever and ever. It

* Firmaun—imperial decree, grant, or charter.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

moreover styles the Company "*our* FAITHFUL "SERVANTS, *and sincere well-wishers, worthy* "*of our royal favours, the English Company.*" Khalsa Shereefa, too, means properly the royal treasury or exchequer. When applied to land, the term Khalsa signifies lands, the revenues of which are paid into the exchequer, as contradistinguished from Jaghire, or other lands, the government share of whose produce has been assigned to others. The office of Dewan of the Khalsa Shereefa is, therefore, literally the office of financial minister for Bengal, &c. We must consequently, I apprehend, rest our right of *sovereignty* on some more solid or admittable basis than the Dewanny grant. The right of property in the soil will be more fully discussed in subsequent pages.

Dewanny grant A. D. 1765.

The Chucklas* of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong, had been ceded to the Company by the Nabob Meer Cossim Ali Khan, in 1760. The twenty-four Purgunnahs of Calcutta had been previously ceded to the Company, as Zemindars thereof, in 1757; and these grants were now confirmed by a separate Firmaun from the Mogul Emperor;

* Chuckla — a division of a country consisting of several Purgunnahs, sometimes equal to a moderate-sized English county; and of which a certain number constituted a Circar, or chiefship.

BENGAL. Revenue settlements previous to 1789. Dewanny grant A. D. 1765.

but with this difference, that from the year 1765, the complete dominion over these four districts was ceded to the Company under the imperial seal, as a "free gift and Altum-"gha," or royal grant, in perpetuity, of which the Company were therefore to stand possessed, "from generation to generation for "ever and ever."

On the 30th September of the same year, the Nabob, or Soubahdar of Bengal, Nudjum ul Dowla, whom we ourselves had only placed in the Soubahdary in the preceding month of February, recognized the imperial grant; and consented to resign his powers on receiving, as a stipend, 5,386,131 sicca rupees per annum, for the maintenance of himself and family, and attendants. His elevation to the Musnud* in February 1765, was indeed attended with a series of the most disgraceful transactions on the part of the deputation from Calcutta, who were authorized to invest him with his new dignity at Moorshedabad; and who exacted from him in personal presents to themselves, £250,000. He was moreover required to disband his army; to maintain no more troops than were necessary for his personal dignity; and to receive a Naib, or deputy, on the part of the Governor and

* Musnud — throne, or chair of state.

Council, for the administration of the civil and military affairs of the Soubahdary. This Naib was Mahomed Reza Khan, (with whom were afterwards associated Juggut Seet, and Roydullub) in whose hands the Nabob must have been a cypher. His fall to the state of a pensioner, after a reign of seven months, might indeed have been anticipated at the moment of his elevation.*

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Dewanny grant A. D. 1765.

Company's administration.

Although the whole civil and military power — in other words the *sovereignty* — of the country was thus assumed on the part of the East India Company,† but exercised in the name of the Nabob; still it was not thought prudent at first to vest the manage-

* Verelst's View of Bengal, p. 51., and Appendix, p. 2. &c.

† Lord Clive and the Select Committee, in reporting these transactions to the Court of Directors, under date 30th September, 1765, express themselves in the following terms: "You "are now become the *sovereigns* of a rich and potent "kingdom," adding in another place—"Mr. Sykes has ex- "erted his utmost diligence in procuring an exact estimate of "the amount of the revenues of the Nabob's dominions, of "which you are not only the collectors, but the *proprietors*." Whether the word "proprietors," in this sentence, be referred to "revenues"—or "dominions"—it clearly indicates that sense of property in the land, which the Bengal servants, and the Court of Directors, have, according to the Mahomedan doctrine, very generally attached to sovereignty.

BENGAL.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

ment of the revenue, or the administration of justice, in the hands of inexperienced European servants. The same native officers, as before, were accordingly employed to carry into execution the very same system which had thus been transferred to us with the country, from its former Mahomedan rulers.

The Chucklas or provinces of Burdwan, &c. —had been managed by officers on the part of government ever since the year 1760; that is, they were superintended by covenanted servants of the Company, whilst the same system of internal administration prevailed there as in other parts.* .

The lands of all our possessions were in these days, let to farmers; but on assessments, which are avowed to have been mere "*conjectural estimates.*" When Zemindars, or farmers, were suspected of large emoluments, the Jumma was proportionally increased. Imposts were thus laid on the country at discretion; often too heavy to be discharged; and remissions, on the other hand, granted in equal ignorance of real resources. The farmers, acting on the same principles, found their estimates of profit

* Verelst's View of Bengal, chap. II., and Appendix, p. 212 to 239.

equally fallacious; and though Ryots were compelled to yield up their last farthing, wherever it could be extorted, farmers were still unable to discharge their engagements; and balances accumulated in all parts.

To prove that the component articles of an assessment were merely conjectural, Mr. Shore gives the result of his examination of the accounts of one district (Rungpoor), from the years 1762-3, to 1786-7, inclusive, in which the Jumma fixed on the lands appears to have varied from 5 lacs to 11 lacs, and vice versâ. In one of the intervening years, on an attempt to increase the revenue, one item of the account or 81,960 rupees, is called by the very term of "*conjectural increase.*"

In the absence of all rule, and of all knowledge of the real resources of the country, the following course of proceeding is given as a notable substitute. It may serve also to prove that even ignorance has its expedients, and is not always without ingenuity. "It has "been the object (Mr. Shore observes) of this "government to raise as large a revenue as "it could, without distress to its subjects. "They, on the contrary, equally attentive to "their own interests, exert their ingenuity to "procure a diminution in the amount of their "contributions. Upon these terms an officer

BENGAL. Revenue settlements previous to 1789. Company's administration.

" of Government, and a Zemindar or farmer, " when a settlement is to be concluded, meet. " The former looks to the highest amount of " the settlement, and collections for former " years; and attempts to gain for his con- " stituents what he deems them entitled to; " the latter pleads inability, and suggests a " variety of reasons to shew the necessity for " lowering the amount. It may so happen " that both the demand may be right, and the " facts stated in objection be just; that is, " that resources may exist, which sufficiently " counterbalance the affirmed losses; and " which the Zemindars, or farmers, will not " discover; or the reverse may be true. In " the former case, government, by insisting " on its own terms, gains only what it ought; " but wanting accurate information of the " real state of the district, and of the sources " from which its demands are to be made " good, is exposed to further deficiency from " claims which cannot be refuted. In the " latter the Zemindar must either be dispos- " sessed, or become subject to distress, from " which he is to recover by future exaction."* This mode of proceeding having apparently continued up to 1789, Mr. Shore gives it as a

* Appx. 5th Rep. p. 179.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

reason for utter inability to estimate what the proper amount of assessment for the country should then be.

Company's administration.

Mr. Shore's account of the Bengal revenues abounds with other proofs of the confusion, and uncertainty, of the system. He admits the rates of assessment to have been so heavy on the Ryots in many districts, that their capacity to discharge them could only arise from their secretly holding lands which paid no rent.

But, of this system of land taxation, it is not enough to say that it is a mere conjectural estimate. What I contend for is, that accuracy, precision, a just and equal rate of taxation, are utterly unattainable under it; and that its peculiar liability to collusion and fraud, as well as to error—the complicated nature of the taxes—the various and ever varying sources whence they are drawn—the character and disposition of those employed as well in the collection, as the assessment, thereof—and the total absence of every thing like efficient controul over their acts—may be taken as so many warrants for practices, universally, of oppression and injustice, to which nothing but confirmed poverty, ignorance, and hopelessness, could induce human nature to submit.

BENGAL.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

In 1769, supervisors were appointed to superintend the native officers; with detailed instructions to inquire into the history, existing state, produce, and capacity, of the provinces; the condition of the people; regulations of commerce; and the administration of justice. The result of these inquiries was to represent the internal government of the country as in a state of great misrule; and the people suffering great oppression. The "Nazims * exacted what they could from the Zemindars and great farmers of the revenue, whom they left at liberty to plunder all below; reserving to themselves the prerogative of plundering them in their turn, when they (the farmers) were supposed to have enriched themselves with the spoils of the country."

In respect to the administration of justice, every man exercised it who was powerful enough to make others submit to his decisions.†

The state of Burdwan and the other Chucklas mentioned in *page* **335**, is represented on

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* Nazim, governor of a province and minister of criminal justice.

† 5th Rep. p. 5. For a copy of the instructions to the Supervisors. See Mr. Verelst's View of Bengal, Appx. p. 227.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

one occasion by Governor Verelst and his council, to be more prosperous than that of the other districts; but this is government's own account of its own management; or a casual instance perhaps of the spirit of national partiality. For in other parts of Governor Verelst's work the reverse is distinctly admitted. When, therefore, it is considered that the same system prevailed in these districts as in other parts, with the same tribes of Zemindars, Talookdars, Jaghiredars, Foujdars, Farmers, Aumils, Muttaseddees, Mohurrers, Gomastahs, Canongoes, Mokuddums, Putwaries, Pycars, Dellols, Darogas, Cutwals, Pykes,* &c. for their administration, the reader will perhaps be more disposed to concur in the Court of Directors' view of the state of these districts, as given in their letter to the Bengal government of the 21st of November, 1766,† wherein it is avowed that "the glaring frauds known "and connived at in the collection of the re- "venues at Burdwan, and Midnapore, amply "justify *your opinion* that all ranks are tainted "with corruption and licentiousness."

In 1772 the government of Mr. Hastings took the entire management of the provinces

* These are merely officers of different denominations, employed in the administration of the revenue and police.

† Verelst's View, Appx. p. 248.

BENGAL.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

into their own hands. A board of revenue was established at the Presidency; the four junior members of which constituted a Committee of Circuit to carry into execution the arrangement then adopted, in the provinces. The supervisors were turned into collectors, with suitable native establishments, and the lands let, on leases of five years, to the *highest bidders* who could, at the same time, produce security for the payment of the rent. The professed object of this recourse to open competition was to ascertain the real value of the country, from the want of other means to acquire it. But the event disappointed the expectations both of the government, and of the farmers themselves.

Company's administration.

Two courts of justice were established in each collectorship, over which the collector himself presided, one, the civil court, for the cognizance of civil causes, called the Dewanny court; and the other, the criminal court, for the trial of crimes and misdemeanors, called the Foujdary court. Appeals from these courts lay to superior courts at the Presidency—the chief court of civil judicature being called Dewanny Sudder Adawlut, and the chief court of criminal justice, Nizamut Sudder Adawlut. These courts were founded on pure Mahomedan principles, and furnished with Mahomedan officers.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

A Cauzy, Moofty, and two Moolavies,* sat in the criminal courts to expound, and administer, the Mahomedan law; the European collectors only giving a general superintendence, to insure impartiality in their proceedings.

But if these courts had been better constructed in the first instance, they would still have been inefficient in affording protection and justice to so poor and numerous a population as that of India, where the local influence of Europeans, compared with that of natives in authority, is as a child's to a giant's strength; for another regulation, which was at the same time passed, provided, that "to "facilitate the course of justice (as it was "called) in trivial cases, all disputes of pro- "perty, not exceeding 10 rupees, should be "cognizable by the *head farmer of the Per-* "*gunnah* to which the parties belonged; *whose* "*decision was final.*"† There can be no doubt that this must have thrown all the effective power of the Pergunnah, or district, into the hands of the Zemindar farmer; and in nine

* Cauzy—judge. Moofty—Mahomedan law officer, who declares the sentence. Moolavy—interpreter of the Mahomedan law.

† 5th Report, page 6.

BENGAL.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

cases out of ten, probably, would make himself judge in his own cause.

When the five years' revenue settlement was made, the country was slowly recovering from a dreadful famine, which had destroyed one-third of its population.* The farmers, unmindful of this calamity, bid eagerly for the leases; but failing afterwards in their engagements, and defalcations of revenue occurring to an enormous amount, the European collectors were recalled from the provinces in 1774, and native Aumils † substituted for them. The general superintendence of the collectors was, at the same time, vested in six provincial councils, at Calcutta, Burdwan, Dacca, Moorshedabad, Dinagepore, and Patna. The administration of justice was also transferred to the Aumils: subject to appeals to the provincial councils; and from the latter to the chief civil court, called Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, at the Presidency

The remarks of the Court of Directors on this quinquennial settlement will best explain the state of the country at the juncture alluded

* Mr. Hamilton computes that this famine destroyed upwards of three millions of human beings in Bengal.—Ham. Art. Bengal, p. 214.

† Aumil — native collector or superintendant of a district.

to—that is—after it had been 12 years under our management; as well as the general effect of our administration.

"We have already intimated our opinion "that arbitrary increases prove generally fal- "lacious. We shall now add that the disap- "pointment to us is not the only evil. The "country is drained by farmers, or by the "Tehsildars, Sezawels and Aumeens* of Go- "vernment, none of whom have any perma- "nent interest in its prosperity. The Ze- "mindars are discontented, many of them de- "prived of their lands, overwhelmed by debts, "or reduced to beggary; the attention of the "officers of revenue is bewildered in the de- "velopment of obscure accounts, a door is "open for corruption and chicane, and in the "end, the justice of Government is driven to "the necessity of granting remissions to re- "pair the wrongs its own rapacity had created, "which gives the people fair reason to con-

* Tehsildar—a native collector of a district. Sezawul—a native officer employed on a monthly allowance to collect the revenues. Aumeen—trustee, commissioner, a temporary collector or supervisor appointed to the charge of a country on the removal of a Zemindar, or for any other particular purpose of local investigation or arrangement.

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Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

"clude that there is no steadiness in our "government.

"These observations are proved by the "voluminous proceedings of all our Revenue "Boards, and by the incredible amount of "remissions and balances which stand upon "our records. Those for the five years' set- "tlement formed by the Committee of Cir- "cuit, with the flattering prospect of an in- "creasing Jumma, amount to upwards of one "hundred lacs (ten million) of sicca Rupees, "and we find that of late years, the defici- "encies of each year have been greater than "was formerly the case, which we attribute "more to the arbitrary increases of the Jum- "ma, and the unsteadiness of our system, "than to any want of exertion or ability in "our servants."*

On the expiration of the quinquennial leases, or in 1777, the lands were again let to farmers, under the general superintendence of the provincial councils. A preference was now given to the Zemindar, if he would engage for the amount of the former settlement; or such amount as should be required by the

* Letter from the Court of Directors to Bengal, 12th April, 1786.—Vide 2nd Report, Appx. p. 158.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

provincial councils; and instead of producing security, it was stipulated in the lease that, in the event of failure in payments, his lands should be sold to liquidate outstanding balances. On these principles annual settlements were made for the three following years, 1778, 1779, 1780; but the revenue fell short of what had been realized under the former native agency: and a new plan was accordingly introduced in 1781.

Company's administration.

The provincial councils were now abolished, the president of each remaining to officiate as collector; and a committee, afterwards styled board, of revenue, sat at the presidency to superintend their proceedings. The lands were again let to the Zemindars by the Committee of Revenue on nearly the same terms as before; except that an increase on the former Jumma, of more than 26 lacs of rupees, was proposed to be effected. The settlements of the Committee were annual; but with an assurance to the Zemindar farmer that in instances when the revenue was regularly discharged he should have the option of continuance on the same assessment. This assessment however appears to have been fixed at the *highest amount of the actual collection* in any one year, from 1771 to 1780 inclusive, which

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Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

the Court of Directors justly thought a very *inequitable standard.* The consequence was, that up to 1783, the outstanding balances of revenue amounted to the very large sum of 7,100,000 S. R. all of which remained uncollected in May, 1785; at which period the Committee's management still continued.*

The Dewanny courts were now made independent of the revenue department; a covenanted servant presided over each, styled Superintendant of Dewanny Adawlut; and a separate judge (Sir Elijah Impey) was appointed to the charge and superintendence of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut at the presidency: thereby relieving the governor and council of this portion of their former duties. But this latter part of the arrangement was disapproved by the Court of Directors; so that in November, 1782, the superintendence of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut was resumed by the governor-general in council, as before.

Act 24 Geo. 3. cap. 25.

In 1784, Parliament passed the Act, 24th Geo. 3. cap. 25. "for the better regulation and "management of the affairs of the East India "Company," &c. by the 39th section of which

* Vide letter from Court of Directors to the Bengal Government, 12th April, 1786.—2nd Report, Appx. p. 158.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

the Court of Directors are commanded to inquire into complaints of "various landholders "having been unjustly deprived of, or compelled to abandon, their respective lands, "jurisdictions, rights, and privileges, the tributes, rents, and services, required to be by "them paid, or performed, for their respective "possessions, to the said Company, having "become grievous and oppressive—and thereupon, according to the circumstances of the "respective cases of the said Rajas, Zemindars, Polygars, Talookdars, and other native landholders; it is further enacted, that "orders and instructions be given to the "several governments in India, for effectually "redressing, in such manner as shall be consistent with justice and the laws and customs of the country, all injuries and wrongs "which the said Rajas, Zemindars, Polygars, "Talookdars, and *other native landholders*, "may have sustained unjustly, and for setting and establishing upon principles of "moderation and justice, *according to the* "*laws and constitution of India*, the permanent rules by which their respective tributes, "rents, and services, shall be in future rendered and paid to the said Company by the "said Rajas, Zemindars, Polygars, Talookdars, and *other native landholders*."

BENGAL.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

On Lord Cornwallis's arrival, in 1768, it was found that the country was by no means in a state to admit of the intentions of the legislature, and the instructions of the Court of Directors, thereon founded, being carried into effect. Some good is reported to have been effected by a better (though still imperfect) administration of justice in our courts; by the abolition of certain usages, fees, and arbitrary taxes; but in the revenue department a deplorable want of information, and of system, still prevailed. There were heavy arrears outstanding on the settlement of the last four years, formed by the committee of revenue. Many Zemindars had been dispossessed to make room for other farmers; the object of which, though ineffectual, was always "*increase of* "*revenue.*" Much remained to be ascertained with regard to ancient laws and usages; to the nature of landed tenures; the resources of the country; and the relative situation and condition of the persons concerned in the production of the revenue; all which the statute abovementioned required to be attended to. His Lordship therefore determined to continue the annual farming system, through the agency of the collectors, still hoping that the requisite information for enabling government to conclude a settlement of the revenue

for a period of ten years, with an ultimate view to perpetuity, would at length be procured.

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

In the mean time, or in June 1787, another change in the judicial system took place by order of the Directors. The Dewanny courts were again placed under the collectors; who were now constituted collectors, judges, and magistrates, in their respective circles. Some alterations also took place in the administration of criminal justice, not necessary here to mention.

Company's administration.

It thus appears, that the lands in Bengal were uniformly let to contractors or farmers of the public revenue, from the earliest time of the Dewanny grant, to the introduction of the permanent settlement. The fact indeed deserves particular notice. The Mussulman system having been uninterruptedly continued with all its abuses and all its obstructions, it was conceived throughout this period, that native farmers would be better acquainted with the true value of the lands than their rulers; and farms were accordingly resorted to, because no other means offered, or could be devised, for ascertaining the real resources of the country.

Dr. Smith, in treating of this mode of financial administration, says, that farmers of the public revenue have no bowels for the contributors, who are not their subjects; and whose

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universal bankruptcy, if it should happen the day after their farm expires, would not much affect their interest. "Even a bad sovereign (he "adds) feels more compassion for his people, "than can ever be expected from the farmers "of his revenue." From the description given of the conduct of those in Bengal by the supervisors in 1769 (*p.* **341**), it is clear that eastern farmers cared as little, as their western brethren, for the interest of the unhappy people placed within their grasp; neither does the partial record of our own acts contain a single boast of their humanity, or disinterestedness, at any subsequent period.

With the mere substitution of European principals for Nazims, the whole system was thus purely Mahomedan, conducted on the same principles, and the revenue realized through the same means, as had been employed by our Mahomedan predecessors. The financial administration was, every where, one of pure discretion. Our practice for ever at variance with our professions. Regulations were enacted; but these were either useless or disregarded, the will of agents in local authority being paramount to all law. Change after change was attempted, and offices multiplied with a view to effective superintendence and controul; but were productive only of disquiet

Revenue settlements previous to 1789.

Company's administration.

to the inhabitants, and vast expence to the state. Ryots, left to the mercy of their oppressors, were frequently loaded with fresh taxes, or cesses, generally imposed at intervals of two, three, or four years; and if at all tolerable, they would rather submit than dare to complain. But where successive impositions became too heavy for endurance, either the Ryots absconded, or the local officers granted them fresh land at a more favourable rate, without however remitting the other imposts; the fresh lands, in process of time, being also subject to the additional cesses or Abwabs. In this way farmers, Zemindars, and others, having established an influence and power within their respective circles, which set courts, and collectors, and provincial councils, at nought, were left in reality with as much liberty as ever to "plunder all below them;" and the people, exposed to all the calamities resulting from "breach of trust, abused patronage, "perverted justice, and unrestrained oppres-"sion."*

* At this time, although the Tumar Jumma was often referred to as a kind of sacred relic, or exemplar highly worthy of imitation, it does not appear that either this celebrated standard, or the Mussulman administration, or the continuance of the same system under the Company's government furnished

SECTION IV.

PERMANENT, OR ZEMINDARY SETTLEMENT IN BENGAL.

From Lord Cornwallis's first arrival in India, his zeal and anxiety to improve the con-

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any fixed or ascertained general rules for the division of landed produce, or the collection of rent or revenue from the Ryots. Mr. Shore distinctly admits, that there were none by which the portion of Zemindars could be precisely defined; (Mr. Shore's Minutes, June 1789, par. 365 and 379, &c.) whilst of the Ryots he adds "their rights appear very uncertain or indefinite—whilst the demands of government on the Zemindars were regulated by some standard, as *I conclude it was* from the time of Turymull to that of Jaffier Khan they had little temptation, or necessity, to oppress the Ryots; but the same variable discretion which has affected the payments required from them, has extended in the same manner to the Ryots. The rates of the lands were *probably* fixed formerly, according to the nature of the soil and its produce; the cesses imposed by the Zemindars were an enhancement of the rates, and arbitrary, without being at first oppressive. The Zemindars, when an increase has been forced upon them, have exercised the right of demanding it from the Ryots.

"In every district throughout Bengal, where the license of exaction has not superseded all rule, the rents of the land are regulated by known rates called Nirk; and in some districts, *each village has its own.* These rates are formed with respect to the produce of the land at so much per Beegah; some soil produces two crops in a year of different species, some three; the more profitable articles, such as

dition of the people were conspicuous; but his means of information as to the resources

" the mulberry plant, beetle leaf, tobacco, sugar cane, and " others, render the value of the land proportionally great.

" These rates *must have been* fixed on a measurement of " the land, and the settlement of Turymull *may have* furnished " the basis of them. In the course of time cesses were super- " added to that standard, and became included on a subse- " quent valuation; *the rates varying with every succeeding* " *measurement.* At present there are many Abwabs, or " cesses, collected distinct from the Nirk, and not included in " it, although they are levied in certain proportions to it," (5th Report, Appendix, p. 205.) In respect, therefore, to the public revenue in Bengal up to this period, usage and former years' collections seem to have been the only guide; discretion the only measure of demand—and every Ryot required to contribute according to his supposed ability to pay.

Of the Zemindars, Mr. Shore says (p. 203), " I doubt if " any precise rules of limitation can be fixed for determining " the quantum of profits to be left to the Zemindars." " The " proportion of the revenues to be left to the Zemindars was " never, as far as I know, fixed by any established rule." It may, therefore, be inferred that the 10 per cent. allowed to Zemindars was a mere nominal amount. Of these, as well as the Ryots, Mr. Shore adds (p. 217), " We know also that the " Zemindars continually impose new cesses on the Ryots; " and having subverted the fundamental rules of collection " (Turymull's scheme) measure their exactions by the abilities " of the Ryots. This is a very serious evil, for exclusive of the " injury which the unprotected subjects of government sustain " from it, a necessity follows of our interference to regulate the " assessment on them, *a task to which we are rarely equal.*

BENGAL.

Permanent settlement.

of the country, were, for the reasons above given, lamentably defective. His measures in respect to the famed Zemindary settlement were nevertheless taken in 1789. At first it was a decennial settlement, to be declared permanent, if approved by the Court of Directors. Some amendments took place in 1791; and the Court's approval having been received, Lord Cornwallis notified the permanency by public proclamation, dated 22d March 1793.

The system adopted was simply this.

It has been already shewn how the enormity of the Mahomedan exactions annihilated the class of landed proprietors, and actually extinguished the traces of proprietary right, in provinces long subject to their oppressive influence. This was peculiarly the case in

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" That it has been accomplished is admitted, but generally, I " believe, either at the expense of government or its subjects; " that is, the Jumma is lowered beyond what it ought to be. " or kept up at too high a rate." From other parts of Mr. Shore's minute, it would seem, however, that annual assessments were in practice in Bengal, as in other parts of India, previous to the permanent settlement, and that the Zemindars, or farmers of the revenue, regulated their demands on the Ryots, by estimate of the harvest in each year, or by partition of the crops, in the same way, as will be more fully explained in treating of the Madras revenues. (*Vide p.* **404** *to* **415.**)

the Bengal provinces; where, on the British government coming into possession, it was found that the principal occupiers of the land in villages and districts, from the Zemindars downwards, could be regarded in no other light than as servants with appointments, and assigned duties, from government. In some instances, Zemindars and other village servants had been paid for their services by grants of land either free, or at easy [rent, which led to a belief that the Zemindars were actual proprietors; but if this could not be proved, reason and humanity, it was added, seemed to urge the introduction of a system conferring this right, as a remedy for acknowledged evils. The settlement being determined on, a general concurrence prevailed in favour of its being made with the Zemindars; to which the Court of Directors added their assent afterwards—not as a claim to which the Zemindars had any grounds of right, but as a grace which it was good policy to bestow.*

The lands in Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, were accordingly divided into estates, and parcelled out in absolute right to Zemindars, who were thus raised, from their former state of hereditary collectors, or farmers, of revenue, to figure in future as a "landed aris-

* 5th Report, p. 16 and 192.

BENGAL. Permanent settlement.

"tocracy." In the division of the produce of these estates, it was at the same time fixed, or rather *estimated*, that after deducting the expense of collection, one half, or 2-5ths, would be left, as before, to the Ryots; the remaining half, or 3-5ths, constituting the rent of the estate; of which 10-11ths were seized by the government as a tax, and 1-11th left to the Zemindars.*

* This is the ordinary way of stating the proportions of produce allotted to the parties concerned. (Vide Regul. II. 1793.)

Strictly speaking, however, the "assessment," i. e. the government share, was required by the orders of the Court of Directors, to be equal to the average of former years' collections. These collections being a continuance of the system of the native government, according to which, the Ryot had only one half or 2-5ths of the produce, the remainder was the government's; out of which the Zemindar had his Russoom, or fees, said to amount to 1-10th, and other subordinate officers certain minute shares. According to this division, the Zemindar's share would only be 6 per cent. of the whole produce.

But in another part of the 5th Report, the government share is stated to be "10-11ths of the rent paid by the tenantry," whence 1-11th only remained for the Zemindar. If then the rent were 60 per cent. of the produce, the Zemindar's share would be $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the produce; or if the rent were only 50 per cent., or one half the produce, the Zemindar's share would only be about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. (5 Report, pp. 13, 16, 19, 27, 29.) These, however, are fanciful rates, and serve to mislead. It would probably be more correct to say that there is not a single instance of a Zemindary in which these proportions are practically observed, or can be enforced.

As the Jumma* was fixed never to be increased; so, on the other hand, remissions were declared to be inadmissible; whether on the plea of loss from unfavourable seasons, inundations, or any other natural calamity. In this respect good and bad years were expected to balance each other.

To each estate there were attached certain portions of waste, or uncultivated, lands: and as the Jumma, or tax, fixed on the cultivated parts was declared to be the utmost leviable from the whole estate, any benefit which the Zemindar could derive from the future cultivation of his wastes would of course be his own. Great inconvenience, however, arose, in the sequel, from the boundaries of these wastes not having been defined.

The introduction of this system was accompanied by a complete code, for the administration of justice. The judicial powers of revenue officers were hereby annulled. Separate courts of civil and criminal judicature were accordingly appointed for the provinces subject to the presidency of Fort William; with regulations also for the police.

Among other regulations, or laws, it was then enacted that the Zemindar could only proceed, for arrears of rent, against a Ryot by

* Jumma—total of a territorial assessment.

BENGAL. Permanent settlement.

a regular and tedious process in the local or Zillah* court of the district to which he belonged. Whereas the collector proceeded against the Zemindar, for arrears of revenue, by summary process;—that is,—in default of payment, by imprisonment, and confiscating the estate, and bringing it to sale for the satisfaction of the government demand. In 1794 this law was modified, by exempting the landholders from imprisonment; but the rule for recovering arrears of revenue was rendered still more rigid. The collector, on failure of any one *monthly* instalment, could bring the estate to sale *immediately;* instead of waiting, as before, till the end of the year.

In consequence of this regulation, every Calcutta gazette, for years after the introduction of the system, abounded with advertisements of the sale of confiscated estates. In this way the newly raised Zemindars—many of them of ancient families, and respected as hereditary collectors—were swept from the face of the country, with unexampled rapidity;

* The lower courts, or courts of primary jurisdiction established in districts and cities, were called Zillah courts, the judge of which was also magistrate of his division, and superintendant of police. From the Zillah courts appeals lay to provincial courts of appeal; and from the latter to the chief courts of civil and criminal judicature at the Presidency.

insomuch that in about twelve to fifteen years from the introduction of the system, few of them remained as proprietors of their estates. Before it was possible for the Zemindars to recover balances from the Ryots, their lands were sold and resold, to speculators and monied men in Calcutta, to make good arrears of revenue; and thus another "landed aristo-"cracy" sprung up; among whom were greedy adventurers, whose object was to extract from their purchases all that could be realized in the shape of gain.

It appears also that native officers of the courts of justice, and in the revenue department, became in many instances purchasers of these confiscated estates; a practice which, when discovered, the Court of Directors very justly reprobated in strong terms,* from its tendency to excite a common feeling with the fraternity of Zemindars injurious to under

* Selection of Papers, &c. Vol. I. p. 323. Letter to Bengal, 8th April, 1817. In another dispatch from the Court of Directors to Bengal, dated 29th January, 1813, (Rev. Sel. p. 81.) it is stated that "Tehsildars have been in different instances indi-"rectly the purchasers of confiscated estates; and there was "too much reason to fear that this was the case in many "others; and that *lands had been sold to realize the arrears* "*of defaulting farmers when no balance was due from the* "*contributors.*"

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farmers and Ryots, in regard to suits instituted by them in the Adawluts; and more particularly where suits might be instituted against the officers themselves as Zemindars; or against those to whom they might have entrusted the management of their estates.

The system however abovementioned, as to processes in the Adawlut, was again modified in 1799, by restoring to the Zemindars their former summary power of recovering rents from the Ryots; in consequence of which it is stated that *greater punctuality has prevailed in the realization of the revenue;* but with severities amounting often to torture of the poor wretches who have to pay it. Still the system went on, although it was officially certified to government, as early as 1802, that it was felt, throughout the country, as more harsh and oppressive than any that had before been resorted to; that the custom of imprisoning landholders for arrears of revenue was mild and indulgent to them in comparison with the present practice; which occasioned, it was added, more distress and beggary, and a greater change in the landed property of Bengal, than ever happened in the same space of time in any other age or country.*

* Collector of Midnapore's Report, 12th February, 1802. Vide 5th Rep. p. 60.—In a minute, by Mr. Rocke, entered

In the anxiety to carry this system into effect, the rights of various persons having at least an interest in the soil were overlooked, notwithstanding the act of 1784 required these rights, and the ancient laws and customs of the country, to be specially attended to. Talookdars, and petty Zemindars, existed, who from time immemorial were entitled to emancipation from the superior Zemindars' authority; and to pay their revenue direct to government. Others again were dependant on the Zemindars. The claims of independence were numerous; but the right in many cases doubtful. The collector had to decide on some; others were referred to the Adawluts. But the adjustment of these claims, in favour of Talookdars, taking place after the Zemindary settlement itself had been put in force, it so happened that, in some instances, considerable Zemindars found their estates wholly taken from them in detached portions, by decrees of Court; and themselves forced to become pensioners of government. "In some other "instances, the purchasers of land at the

on the Bengal Rev. Consultations, 12th Aug. 1815, it is also stated that subsequently to the period of the permanent settlement "probably one-third, or rather one-half of the landed "property in the province of Bengal, may have been transferred "by public sale *on account of arrears of revenue.*" (Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 358.)

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" public sales were left in a similar predica-
" ment, and compensation for the loss sus-
" tained claimed by the purchaser, and al-
" lowed by government." The number of separations, into minute portions, of land thus effected were at length so numerous, and attended with *injury to the revenue*, that in 1801 a regulation was passed to cut the difficulty short by declaring that no further separations would be allowed after a certain period.* Another regulation, intended to guard against abuses affecting the public revenue, prescribed that no separation of lands should be made unless the Jumma of the separated land should amount to 500 rupees.†

In the arrangements thus made with Zemindars and Talookdars, there is reason to apprehend that other rights, and still more important ones, were entirely overlooked. When the collector of Shahabad was arranging the decennial settlement with Zemindars of that district, many occupants of land came forward to object to a settlement being made with any but themselves, *as Maliks*,‡ or actual

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* 5th Rep. p. 28. † Do. Appx. p. 934.

‡ Mal is an Arabic word, denoting wealth, property, revenue, rent—particularly that arising from land—and Malik means master, lord, proprietor, owner of such rent.

hereditary proprietors. The claims of the Maliks were urged with the greatest importunity. At the same time they absolutely refused to enter into any kind of engagement, but as Maliks; declaring they would rather lose their lives than acquiesce in a relinquishment of what they considered their hereditary rights. These representations, however, could not be attended to by the collector, who was instructed to effect his settlements, in all cases, with the Zemindars.

But the case of the Maliks deserved a much more serious and detailed investigation. They affirmed, and with great probability of truth, that the Zemindars and Talookdars were not the proprietors of the land; neither were they possessed of any deeds whereby they could deprive them (the Maliks) of their just rights. They urged, that, in order to screen themselves against the vexations and extortions of the Aumils* of government, they were obliged to place themselves under the protection of the Talookdars; and that this was the only claim the latter had to superiority. For the same reason, and in the same way, the

* Aumil or Aumildar—agent, officer, native collector of revenue.

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Talookdars sought the protection of the superior Zemindars.

In some instances it appeared that the Zemindars and Talookdars had purchased lands, and villages, of the Maliks; and as purchasers claimed all the rights of proprietors; but the Maliks objected, saying that they were driven to these sales by extreme oppression to satisfy the demands of Aumils; and at a time when lands scarcely bore any value; * offering at the same time, on fair examination of accounts, to pay off all just debts and balances.

In other cases, Maliks were found in possession of lands which they had sold twelve or fifteen years before; the purchaser having been driven from the land by the exactions of the Aumil, whilst the old Malik was willing to submit to any extortion rather than quit the lands of his fathers; which, though dire oppression had compelled him to sell, he still prized more than life.

There are some curious cases of this description given in the collector of Shahabad's letter to the board of revenue in Calcutta, in

* The collector's words are, "when land was rather considered a misfortune than an advantage."

Sep. 1789,* and in these details, as well as from other documents to be noticed in subsequent pages, there are grounds to conjecture at least that landed property of the same description may have existed generally in Bengal; and formerly, in as perfect a state as it has been found, and will be hereafter described, in other parts of India; that these Maliks were the actual proprietors, reduced to the state of cultivators of their own lands; first, by the severities of the Mussulman government, afterwards continued under our administration; and that the Zemindars, and Talookdars, were nothing more than public servants, whose offices had from usage become hereditary; but who had availed themselves of their situations, and of the distresses of the Maliks, to purchase lands; or to appropriate them on sundry pleas and pretences; or, as was sometimes the case, to seize them by violence. This, at all events, was a natural enough state of society in a country where, to use the collector's own words, "the depredating interference of Aumils had oftentimes annihilated proprietary rights; plunged the proprietors in inextricable embarrassment; and

* 5th Rep. Appx. p. 493.

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" rendered every art and evasion necessary to " counteract overrated assessments."

In the printed correspondence from Bengal, dated in 1818 and 1819 it appears that several of these estates, or lands, termed Mehals,* in Shahabad, had become the property of government; some perhaps from having been attached or confiscated for arrears of revenue; for, although assessed at the permanent settlement with a Jumma of 75,687 rupees, they had only yielded, it seems, an average annual revenue of 66,332 rupees. In virtue of the Company's sovereign proprietary right, these Mehals were put up to auction, subject to a fixed Jumma of 70,917 rupees, with the same proprietary title as attached to other lands under the permanent settlement; and fetched, at the sale 675,295 rupees. With this proceeding the Court of Directors were justly displeased, because it was opposed to their express orders to forbear from all further extension of the permanent settlement; because also the lands were in a state of improvement, consequently their value was far below what it might become; and because it deprived

* Mehals or Mahals— places or lands yielding a revenue. This differs from Mal, which means the revenue itself.

government of the means of protecting the rights of the inferior classes of the agricultural population; in respect to which, the Court adds, "the Permanent Settlement in Bengal had so "unhappily failed." The Court therefore directed in their letter, 9th May, 1821, that in no similar case should lands be sold, or subjected to a permanent settlement.

Previously to the receipt of these orders by the government-general, other Mehals had been similarly sold in Behar and Benares, the Jumma of which amounted to 22,156 rupees, and the sale of the proprietary right, subject to the payment of that revenue, to 376,125 rupees.* Of these lands it is expressly stated, that they were estates which had become open to re-settlement on the expiration of leases to farmers; or had reverted to government on the failure of parties, from absence or otherwise, to establish a proprietary interest therein. From the apparent eagerness, however, of the Bengal government, to

* This is nearly seventeen years' purchase of the Jumma—The Shehabad sale is equal to nine years and a half purchase. If these sales be compared with the average of those made in the lower provinces of Bengal, it affords grounds to apprehend that they were hasty acts on the part of the government-general, and that the Jumma of the lands must have been much underrated.

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extend the permanent Zemindary tenure, it is much to be feared that the rights of some of the inferior classes have been, over and over again, extensively sacrificed.* The condition of these neglected proprietors is a matter of paramount importance; and, though cursorily mentioned here, will be further discussed in subsequent parts of this treatise.

The Putwary, or village accountant, formerly an independent officer, with a right to a

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* Bengal Rev. Sel. Vol. III. pp. 451 to 472. The orders of the Court of Directors in respect to these particular sales are very just, and deserving of notice. "Nor can we approve the "sale in so many instances of estates, which have reverted to "government. Under the ignorance which you have so often "avowed of the rights of the several classes claiming an in- "terest in the soil, and the difficulty which a settlement in "perpetuity places in the way of ascertaining and securing "these rights, we cannot but feel surprised that you should so "often manifest an eagerness to alienate in perpetuity those "lands which have become open to assessment, instead of "availing yourselves, which would be the more consistent "course, of every proper opportunity to place as much as pos- "sible of the country in those circumstances in which the ob- "ject of securing the rights of all classes can be most suc- "cessfully attained. As you have already, however, received "our letter of the 9th May, 1821, in which we have instructed "you to abstain from the sale of lands which have reverted to "government, we trust it will not be necessary for us hereafter "to recur to this subject."—Rev. Let. to Beng. 18th February, 1824.

share of the produce of the lands of the village, was now reduced to the situation of a servant to the Zemindar — holding his office at the Zemindar's pleasure — whilst the Canongoes, or registers of districts, were abolished in toto. Their offices, and the lands attached to them, which many of these Canongoes had inherited through several generations,' were resumed on the plea of their being public servants, and therefore removable at pleasure.*

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* The president of the Board of Revenue in 1815 adverting to this change, and its consequences, says, that " the imme- " diate object of the Putwaries' office was a check over the " former Zemindars or farmers of the land revenues. The " Putwaries were in fact the depositaries of the local usages of " the country, from whom it was always easy for the revenue " officers of government to collect correct information regard- " ing the individual rights of the Ryots, in cases of disputes " between them and the Zemindars or farmers. They were " then considered the immediate servants of government, but " now being dependent on the proprietors of the soil, the na- " ture and intention of their original institution are materially " altered, and instead of being the protectors and guardians " of the rights and privileges of the cultivators of the soil, " they are become the zealous and interested partisans of the " new proprietors. Of course little information can now be " derived from that source calculated to secure the Ryots from " the gripe of their new masters. The collectors were strictly " prohibited from calling on them for information, except

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For the protection of the Ryots, against oppression on the part of Zemindars, farmers, and others, sundry rules and regulations were passed in 1793, and subsequent years. Among other provisions, Pottahs,* or written leases, were ordered to be granted to them, specifying and limiting in all cases the amount of demandable rent. Experience, however, has proved this arrangement to have been shamefully neglected, or scandalously abused. In many instances it was ascertained that Zemindars were unwilling to grant Pottahs; and the Ryots as unwilling to receive them — the object of the former being to exact the utmost farthing — and the latter being afraid of binding himself by a deed beyond what he might be able to pay. The consequence was, either that Pottahs were disregarded; or, when given, too frequently made the instruments of extortion and abuse.

" under particular circumstances, so that it would not now be " easy to put them on their ancient footing of utility, without " perhaps some infringement on the stipulations with the pro- " prietors."— Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 375.

* Pottah — a lease granted to cultivators, either written on paper or engraved with a style on the leaf of the Palmira tree, and particularizing with precision the terms of the contract.

But the Pottah arrangement involved other strange anomalies. The Zemindars, with whom the permanent settlement was made, are denominated in the regulations then enacted, "actual proprietors of the soil." Their Zemindaries are called their "landed estates," and all other holders of land their "under tenants." But where the government's share was so great, and the Zemindar's so small, it was natural enough for the latter to covet some addition to their own pittance at the expence of helpless Ryots. It was, moreover, conceived that Ryots had an hereditary right of occupancy in the lands they cultivated, and that they could not be dispossessed as long as they continued to pay their rents according to a local rate of land rent, (Nirk,* or Nerick,) established in each Pergunnah. The Pottah was supposed to specify this rate; and the Zemindar was restricted by law from increasing it. This newly created "proprietor of the soil," could not, therefore, let his own "landed estate" for more than the Nerick or Pergunnah rates. He had no legal means of increasing his rents, except through the cultivation of waste land, or the substitution of more, for less,

* *Vide note, page* 356.

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valuable articles of produce. By another regulation, (XLIV. of 1793, and further extended by Regulation III. of 1796,) Zemindars were restricted from granting leases for a longer period than ten years; neither could they renew a lease except in the last year of the term. But on lands being sold for arrears of public revenue, the leases of such lands were from that time cancelled.* In this complica-

* A common expedient of the Zemindars, to evade the law of leases, may be remarked for its ingenuity. Numerous cases are mentioned where Zemindars, to get rid of existing laws, would purposely fall in arrear to government, that their estate might be sold. By the sale, the leases became void; and the estate being purchased by the former owner, he was thus enabled to let his lands on fresh leases and greatly increased rents. (Obs. on Law and Constitution of India, p. 167.)

Another of their tricks was still more ingenious,—proving at the same time the complete fallacy of our revenue accounts. A Zemindar would put forward one of his own dependants to procure a separation of a portion of his Talook. Matters being previously arranged between the parties, and proofs admitted, the separation claimed was accordingly decided on. The assessment was divided, in due proportion, between the two estates, which were now registered as separate Zemindaries. For two or three years the new proprietor paid his Jumma regularly; and then absconded, or was reported dead. When the officers of government proceeded to attach the separate estate, that it might be sold for arrears of revenue, *no estate could be found corresponding with the registry; it* had vanished with the fugitive. The revenue of the estate, *en l'air*, was of course lost to government; and the Zemindar

tion of restraints and hereditary rights, it may be difficult to say who was constituted the real proprietor of the soil.

The relation of Zemindar and Ryot may, however, be briefly stated, as follows—

First—We have a newly created proprietor of the soil—Zemindar, &c.

Next—A Ryot, whose occupancy of the land he cultivates is declared permanent and hereditary, as long as he continues to pay the Nirk or Nerick, or Pergunnah rates of rent.

To secure the rights of the latter, sundry regulations were passed, by which the Zemindars were required to grant them—What? not titles of permanent occupancy; but *leases* which were never to exceed ten years in duration, nor the Pergunnah rates of the description of land each Ryot occupied; which latter however were left to be settled by the courts of justice.

But the Nirk or Nerick differing in every Pergunnah, and sometimes in the same Pergunnah, and even in adjoining villages, courts of justice had no fixed rules, or standard, whereby to decide disputed points between Zemindars and Ryots. The proposed

continued to hold all that ever had existed of his Talook on the reduced assessment.—Rev. Board's Letter to Govt. Genl. Appx. 5th Rep. p. 934.

Pergunnah rates never were, and never could be ascertained; whence the judgments of the courts were often founded on the most opposite principles.

The constant struggle thus kept up, in respect to unascertained rights, led at length, in 1812, to the repeal or modification of the Pottah regulations, it having been declared "illusory to uphold the expectation of protec- "tion to Ryots under laws which were nearly "ineffectual;" whereupon a new regulation (V. of 1812) was passed, with intent to redress past abuses and irregularities. The expedient resorted to was that Ryots should be entitled to a renewal of their Pottahs at rates equivalent to the average rent, for the preceding three years, of land of the same quality in the same neighbourhood. But as this average rent was always matter of dispute, and could not be ascertained, Pottahs were either not granted, or would not be received; and Zemindars and Ryots were left to settle their agreements on their own terms.

Previously to this, or in 1799, the powers of distress had been greatly increased in the hands of the Zemindar, who was now authorized to consider under tenants, of every description, as defaulters, if their rent was not paid on the very day fixed for its falling due;

and to proceed to immediate distress, if the whole arrear were not paid on demand — the defaulter being also liable for all expences attending the attachment and sale of his property, besides a commission of 6½ per cent. on the amount of the sale.

This regulation was intended to supply that grand desideratum "the security of the public "revenue," which had been shaken or endangered by the litigations of the Zemindar and Ryot. Without inquiring into the source of the evil, government contented itself with arming those who were under engagements for revenue, with additional powers, so as to enable them to realize their demands in the first instance, whether right or wrong; a power which — constituted as our civil courts are — left the Ryots without adequate means of redress for the most manifest extortions.

By the combined operation of these regulations, the PERMANENT OCCUPANT, whose right is admitted on all sides to be derived from the remotest antiquity, and to be antecedent to all law, was now still more completely laid at the mercy of the Zemindar. From *permanent occupant* he was virtually reduced by law — first to the state of a leasehold farmer; and lastly, to that of tenant at will. At the same time the principle was still maintained of

the Ryot's indefeasible right to be protected in the perpetuity of his tenure.

The confusion and oppression which marked the operation of these regulations is not to be described in a small compass. It is, however, abundantly established in official reports now in print. Suffice it to say, that, as usual on occasions of this kind, weakness was obliged to succumb to power. The influence of the Zemindar, and the exercise of that influence, triumphed over all attempts at legal controul; and the Ryots, driven to the wall, were left to console themselves with the possession of an antiquated right, which, though ardently pressed by them on the consideration of their rulers, has hitherto been of as little avail as the paper of the regulations by which they were intended to be protected.

It need only be added, that—although the regulation I. of 1793, when the permanent settlement was proclaimed, which reserved to government full power to adopt at any time such measures as might be necessary for maintaining and protecting the rights of the Ryots rested in the code as a dead letter—it has still always been maintained by the Bengal authorities that the power itself has continued in full force, and has never been

abrogated or impaired by any subsequent regulation, or act. The difficulties, however, of ascertaining and adjusting the rights of the Ryots appear to have been so insurmountable in Bengal, that the board of commissioners in Behar and Benares went so far, in 1818, as to propose the entire annulment of these prescriptive rights, as the best or only means of promoting the prosperity of the country. The proposition attracted the just indignation of the Court of Directors, who remarked on it, that "this annulment of rights would be the "most extensive act of confiscation that ever "was perpetrated in any country." The Court added their anxious wish, which had before been often repeated, that this object might be fully and satisfactorily accomplished. Yet in 1824, or upwards of thirty years after the introduction of the permanent settlement, it was as far from attainment as ever, and probably continues so to the present hour.

At this time (1793), it was supposed that land to a considerable extent, held under exemption from the payment of revenue, existed in Bengal; some lawfully, but a good deal fraudulently, alienated. This, too, remained to be ascertained after the proclamation of permanency. A plan was adopted for the purpose of ascertaining the real merits of these alienations,

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but wholly miscarried: and it is supposed a good deal of property in Bengal is thus held free, on false pretences, to the present day.

The permanent settlement was also introduced under an avowal of imperfect knowledge as to the real value of the lands, or what ought to be the amount of the assessment, on the principle of partition directed to be adopted.* Considering, however, that the settlement was to be perpetual, and irrevocable; that the assessment fixed was to be the utmost government could ever in future derive from the lands; that the pledge to this effect must be for ever held sacred and inviolable; it is quite obvious that these preliminary points ought to have been ascertained in the first instance with the greatest accuracy. But in spite of all the inquiries instituted, the actual resources of the country were still as little known, as the rights and usages of the different orders of people interested in the result. A medium of the produce in former years, drawn from the scanty information of the collectors, was therefore taken as the basis of the assessment, or government portion from each estate; and this was consider-

* 5th Rep. p. 18, 19, 56.

ed, as well in reference to its amount, as to the principle of division, to be a "moderate "Jumma." How far it was so in reality, and practical operation, may be judged by the result. It may be added that the aggregate land revenue, or Jumma, obtained on these principles from the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, amounted to 26,800,989 Sicca rupees; being 800,989 rupees more than estimated by the Court of Directors;* and 1,073,783 rupees more than the settlement of 1786-7. (*Vide p.* **333.**)†

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* 5th Rep. p. 19 and 56.

† Permanent Settlement.....26,800,989
Settlement of 1786-7, (*vide p.* **333.**) 25,727,206

Difference Rps. 1,073,783

It is surprising to see how often well-meaning men suffer themselves to be deluded by a vague use of terms, particularly when speaking of their own acts. How this can be explained to be a "moderate Jumma," is difficult to conceive. The Court of Directors required the Jumma to be equal to the average of former years' revenue. This revenue was collected on the principle, or supposition, of its being fifty or sixty per cent. of the gross produce; but the Jumma of the Permanent Settlement exceeded the Court's estimate by 800,980 rupees, and the settlement of 1786-7 by 1,073,783 rupees; it was, therefore, more than fifty or sixty per cent. of the gross produce by a million of rupees, or thereabouts; whence the Ryots must have paid more to the Zemindars, and the Zemindars to govern-

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This Jumma was assessed in gross sums according to a Cabooleat (written engagement) on each Zemindary; leaving to the Zemindar to divide and distribute the amount, in just proportions over the Pergunnahs, and villages, of his estate. Of this distribution the Zemindar was required to furnish a correct statement, specifying the proportions of the gross Jumma attached to each subdivision or village—the name of each village—the boundaries thereof—the estimated quantity of land contained in it—with other particulars: and, in order to correct inequalities in the distribution of the gross Jumma, a similar village record was required to be delivered in annually, specifying every change that might have occurred from the improvement, or decay, of cultivation, or the cultivation of fresh lands. This account was intended to be the basis of a new Tukseem* for

ment than on an average they did before. The Ryots, therefore, being more heavily taxed, and the Zemindars unable to pay their instalments within a prescribed time, being dispossessed, and beggared, it is obvious that this "moderate Jum-"ma" was productive of no good to any party but government itself, who were in fact the only gainers by the change of system.

* Tukseem—the divisions or constituent parts of the assessment called Tumar Jumma; sometimes applied to designate other standard assessments.

the country; the old Tukseem, as well as the previous Tumar Jumma, (*Vide note*, p. **317**,) from the various changes and alterations which had taken place, being found inapplicable to the existing state of the country; and though the omission of this account was declared to be subject to penalties, at the discretion of government, and even to forfeiture, I do not find, from the records, in print, that it was attended to by the Zemindars.

Finally the settlement was made with Zemindars whose ignorance, rapacity, oppressions, collusions, and abuses of all kinds, are so uniformly attested in the public records that nothing, one would think, could be wanting to prove their entire unfitness for the trust.* The only plea that can be discovered

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* Mr Shore's own testimony on this head is quite conclusive. The remarks of so able, experienced, and distinguished, a public servant will also give the reader a good idea of the practical operation of Indian revenue systems. In his Minute of the 8th Dec. 1789, par. 10, he observes—

"It is allowed that the Zemindars are, generally speaking, "grossly ignorant of their true interests, and of all that relates "to their estates; that the detail of business with their tenants "is irregular and confused; exhibiting an intricate scene of "collusion opposed to exaction, and of unlicensed demand "substituted for methodized claims;—that the rules by which "the rents are demanded from the Ryots are numerous, arbi-

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for the measure is the conviction of both Mr. Shore (Lord Teignmouth) and Lord Cornwallis, that the Zemindars were the real proprietors, or lords of the soil, or that can be supposed to have influenced two such men in conferring, or confirming, powers on persons in other respects so unworthy of the benefit.

" trary and indefinite ;—that the officers of government, pos-
" sessing local controul, are imperfectly acquainted with them ;
" whilst their superiors, further removed from the detail, have
" still less information ; —that the rights of the Talookdars,
" dependant on the Zemindars, as well as of the Ryots, are
" imperfectly understood and defined ;—that in common cases
" we often want sufficient data and experience to enable us to
" decide with justice and policy, on claims to exemption from
" taxes ; and that a decision erroneously made may be fol-
" lowed by one, or other, of these consequences—a diminution
" of the revenues of government, or a confirmation of oppres-
" sive exaction —

" To the truth of this detail there will be no dissenting " voice." It may, I fear, with too much truth, be added, that this also is a state of things which the introduction of the permanent settlement has in no respect improved.

SECTION V.

BENARES PERMANENT SETTLEMENT, 1799.

The Zemindary settlement was extended to Benares in May, 1795; the Raja having been persuaded, in October preceding, to transfer, by treaty, the administration of the country to the Company's government; with the reservation of a few spots, the more immediate property of his own family. The principles of the settlement were here the same as in Bengal; with some slight modifications, intended to adapt it to local circumstances; the main feature—excessive revenue—being here, as every where else, unchangeable, and unchanged.

In this province there were found more traces, than in Bengal, of individual proprietary rights in the soil.* It is even recorded of the Raja, and his ancestors, that, owing to the oppressiveness of their government, several landholders had fled the country; whilst others were reduced to become Ryots or cultivators, at half produce, of their own lands.

The estates, however, when parcelled out, were here, as in Bengal, transferred in full right to Zemindars; but such was the turbulent cha-

* For further notice of these rights, *vide infra, Sect.* XVIII.

BENARES. Permanent settlement.

racter of these Zemindars as to render it necessary, for some years, to have an Aumil over them; who, partaking of the nature of farmer and collector of the public revenue, was made answerable to government for the full amount of the assessment, with an allowance of eleven and a half per cent. on the amount collected to remunerate him for his services and risk.

It appears, too, that the settlement was introduced into this province just seven months from the date of its transfer to the Company's management;—and of course under greater ignorance, if possible, than in Bengal, as to the real resources of the country. The Jumma is stated by the committee of the House of Commons to have been fixed at 3,453,574 sicca rupees.*

SECTION VI.

OUDE REVENUE SETTLEMENTS, 1801.

But if the territorial arrangements in Bengal and Benares are chargeable with impro-

* In a minute of Lord Hastings, 21st Sep, 1815, (Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 406,) the revenue of this district is stated to be 4,468,497 rupees. I cannot trace in the printed records the cause of this difference. The one may be net land revenue, whilst the other perhaps includes farms and licenses, &c.

Revenue settlements.

vident haste, what can be said of those proposed to be introduced into the "Ceded and "Conquered Provinces." The "Ceded provinces" in Oude were made over to the Company, in perpetual sovereignty,* by the Nawaub Vizier in November, 1801; yielding at that time, according to the schedule, an annual gross revenue of 13,523,474 sicca rupees, or £1,600,000 sterling. A short account of the Oude districts will serve to shew the condition of the people under modern Mahommedan government; and how far the measures of the British government have corresponded with our constant professions of intending to promote their happiness and prosperity.

In the time of the Nabob Vizier, the subordinate administration of the country was com-

* This grant (like some others) should be kept in mind, when we come to treat of the rights which are supposed to attach to *sovereignty* in India. The Nawaub Vizier was *legitimately* nothing more than the servant of the Mogul emperor; but this servant, without hesitation, bestows kingly rights on another servant, which that other servant with as little scruple receives, and returns the compliment, a few years afterwards, by encouraging the nabob to assume the title of King, after having despoiled him of one half of the Oude territory. This bandying about of sovereign rights, by servants, is awful in the eyes of Indian *legitimates*, who are now curiously speculating on the probable time which one of these servants will allow the other servant to reign.

mitted to Aumils: who united the characters of collector, and farmer, of the public revenue, and exercised, at their own discretion, the entire civil and military authority over the inhabitants. The country abounded with Zemindars, down to a class called (as in Benares) village Zemindars, who were supposed at first to be officers corresponding with the Potail or Mocuddim * of the lower countries, but of whom more will be said presently. Some of the Zemindars were of higher rank; assuming the title of Raja; possessing strong holds, with numerous armed adherents; and who not only opposed, when they could, the authority of the Aumils, but exercised absolute dominion within their respective limits. Of a country, subjected to the sway of such a horde of petty tyrants, we may easily conceive what must have been the condition of its inhabitants. They are accordingly described, by the authorities on the spot, as "a "people unaccustomed to any regular system "of order or law; and habituated to the ut- "most excesses of violence and oppression."

* Potail—"Head man of a village, who collects the rents "from the other Ryots therein, and has the general superin- "tendence of its concerns—the same person who in Ben- "gal is called Mocuddum and Mundul."—Gloss. 5th Rep.

Revenue settlements.

The first form of government, adopted for the Ceded Provinces, was that of a lieutenant-governor and board of commissioners; under whom were covenanted civil servants, in different parts, acting as collectors, judges and magistrates. For the first year of our possession, the revenues were collected, as formerly, through the intervention of Aumils, farmers, or Tehsildary contractors.* In the second year, a foundation was laid for the permanent assessment of the lands, by letting them for three years, on increasing annual rents, to such landholders† as would agree to the terms proposed. Other lands were let to farm; and some others collected directly by the officers of government. The annual augmentation expected from these engagements, at the end of the third year, was 3,299,589 sicca rupees, or more than 19 per cent. on the Nabob Vizier's rent roll. From a new regulation regarding customs; from a proposed monopoly

* That is —Tehsildars, or subordinate native collectors of a subdivision of country; but made answerable at the same time for a stipulated amount of Jumma.

† By the term "landholder" here used, is meant (as I infer at least from the later records) the village Zemindars abovementioned, of whom more will be said in the sequel. (*Vide infra, Sect.* XVIII.

of salt; and of the sale of spirits; it was further expected that this increase would amount to 5,638,012 sicca rupees; or an addition to the original Jumma of more than forty-one per cent.

We have thus a fair sample of what was meant by the "happiness and prosperity," which the inhabitants were taught to expect, as the result of a transfer from Mahommedan exaction to the milder sway of a British government; and when we consider that this increase—I beg pardon, this "*improvement*"—of revenue took place under the disadvantages of an unfavourable season, and after repeated incursions, during the war, of Mahratta cavalry; and exacted from a people, whom we, in pure kindness, had just rescued from "the utmost excesses of violence and "oppression," it may be taken as the true interpretation of the term "Moderate Jum-"ma," so often used in Indian records, by persons when writing of their own financial operations.

The code of Bengal regulations (revenue and judicial) was extended to the ceded provinces in Oude in 1803. The country was divided into seven Zillahs, or districts, with a judge and magistrate, and a collector to each; and a court of appeal and circuit, with a

suitable establishment of officers, fixed at the town of Bareilly.

The aforementioned triennial settlement of the revenue was at this time confirmed; and a notification at the same time given of the intention of government to introduce the permanent settlement into Oude. As the terms of this notification are, to me, obscure, I shall subjoin them in the words of the official record; which accordingly provides, that "at "the expiration of the triennial term, another "settlement would be made with the same "persons, (if willing to engage) for three "years, at a fixed equal annual Jumma or "assessment, to be formed by taking the dif- "ference between the annual amount of the "first lease, and the actual yearly produce of "the land at the time of its expiration; and "adding two thirds of such difference to the "annual rent of the first lease. At the expi- "ration of this term a settlement for four "years would be made with the same persons, "if willing to engage; at a fixed equal annual "Jumma, formed by adding to the annual "rent of the second three years, three-fourths "of the net increase of the revenue during "any one year of that period. It was further "notified that at the end of the last mention- "ed term of four years (completing altogether

" the term of ten years from the first settle-
" ment) a permanent settlement would be
" concluded with the same persons (if willing
" to engage, and if no others with a better
" claim should come forward) for such lands
" as might be in a sufficiently improved state
" of cultivation to warrant the measure, *on*
" *such terms as the government should deem*
" *fair and equitable.*"

Of this arrangement I profess to understand no more, than that it provides for a constant increase of revenue, through a period of ten years, from a nation of oppressed paupers, until the driblet of the Nabob's rent-roll should be raised to that standard of respectability, commonly called "Moderate Jumma;" and the rate to be finally fixed for a permanent settlement at what government should be pleased, in its mercy and forbearance, to deem "fair and equitable." The permanent settlement was thus proposed to be introduced without any reserve as to the approbation, or otherwise, of the Court of Directors; in complete ignorance too of the real resources of the country, beyond the aforementioned arbitrary exactions; and—what is of greater importance—in equal ignorance (as will be seen presently) of the rights of the real landholders, or proprietors of the soil.

SECTION VII.

CONQUERED PROVINCES — REVENUE SETTLEMENTS, 1805.

About the same time the Company came into possession of the provinces conquered from Scindia, and the Raja of Berar. These consisted of the Dooab, and a tract of country on the right bank of the Jumna bordering on Oude; and of the province of Cuttack, uniting the Bengal territories with those of Fort St. George; to which were added, at the conclusion of the Mahratta war in 1805, by cession from the Paishwa, in commutation of subsidy, the province of Bundelcund, situated on the right bank of the Jumna above Allahabad.

Of these the northern possessions were placed, during the continuance of the war, under the controul of the commander-in-chief, Lord Lake; but, on the conclusion of peace, in 1805, they were formed into five districts, under the administration of revenue and judicial officers, on precisely the same footing as had been extended to Oude. The city of Delhi, and a tract of country round it, were exempted from this jurisdiction; having been

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continued under the nominal authority of the Mogul, but really under the government of the British resident. The same arrangement of three and four years' leases* of the revenue was made here, as in Oude, with the landholders; and the same declaration of permanency at the expiration of the last term; with this difference, that the settlement in perpetuity (the former omission being now discovered) would depend on the confirmation of the Court of Directors. In the regulations of 1803 and 1805, it is also declared that the settlement should only be rendered permanent, in cases where the cultivation of the lands should have been sufficiently advanced, and the landholders punctual in the fulfilment of their engagements throughout the aforementioned decennial period.

SECTION VIII.

UNION OF CEDED AND CONQUERED PROVINCES—REVENUE SETTLEMENTS, 1807.

Previously to the formation of the last, or

* I presume the three years' lease was to expire in 1807-8, which would bring the expiration of the four years' lease to 1811-12; but this is not clearly stated in the report.

four years' settlement, as preparatory to that of perpetuity, it was deemed advisable, in 1807, to appoint another commission for the "Ceded and Conquered Provinces," with the same powers as granted to the first commission. The present commission consisted of a member of the board of revenue, and another experienced civil servant,* with a suitable establishment of officers. This commission very soon entertained doubts of the newly acquired territories being in a state to admit of anything like a permanent assessment; but the determination of government on this head being fixed, the commissioners stated their opinion, in April, 1808, "to be adverse to the "immediate conclusion of a permanent set-"tlement in the territories subject to their "controul;" and accordingly resigned their offices, rather than be made the instruments of an important measure, which their judgment decidedly condemned.

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A new board of commissioners was hereon appointed;† from whose reports, when completed, the supreme government anticipated, in their letter dated August, 1810, that the sound policy, and expediency of the measure,

* Messrs. Cox and Tucker.

† Messrs. Colebrooke (Sir Edward) and Deane.

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would be established beyond all question.* In the meantime, or in February, 1810, the Court of Directors had declared that it would be premature to fix in perpetuity the land revenue of the "Ceded and Conquered Pro-"vinces;" and in 1811 still more decidedly forbid it; ordering that no leases be granted for a longer period than five years.†

The Court's orders are founded on an avowal of imperfect knowledge as to the actual state and capability of these countries, and of the rights and interests of the several classes of persons connected with the soil; and likewise on the mistakes committed in the settlement of the lower provinces, (Bengal,) and of the inconveniences felt from it, although these countries had been so long under our management; and therefore urge the danger of precipitancy in proceeding on such uncertain grounds to the adoption of a measure which was to be irrevocable.

The committee of the House of Commons close this head of their report with the proceedings above adverted to; adding their belief that the new commissioners would prove

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* Beng. Rev. Selections, Vol. I. p. 72.

† 5th Report, p. 53.

more compliant than their predecessors, and proceed to execute the orders of the Supreme Government, without completing the preliminary inquiries which the Court of Directors deemed indispensable.

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In the "Selection from India Records," printed by the Court of Directors in four folio volumes, we accordingly find that the Bengal government, with their new commissioners, persevered in the proposed arrangements for the Ceded and Conquered provinces; but the Court uniformly objected to a permanent settlement of the lands in either of these newly acquired territories. The Zemindars appear, therefore, to have held their lands from the time abovementioned, on leases not exceeding five years' duration. In the letters from Bengal, they are, however, considered and termed "pro-"prietors" of their respective estates; and these estates, it appears, were regularly sold, as in Bengal proper, for arrears of revenue. *

* Lord Moira's remarks on these sales are particularly deserving of notice — "The advantage (of sales of land) is "therefore at all events precarious; but such as it is, it is "purchased at the expence of the rights of a whole co-part-"nership, (the estates alluded to being co-partnership estates) "which it virtually annihilates, and at the expence of the well-"being, and peace, of the district which it invariably disturbs.

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Revenue settlements.

The correspondence on this head is continued, in the volumes above referred to, up to Au-

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" An endless litigation in the courts of judicature, between the " government, the purchaser, and the former engager, and " joint proprietors, is an evil which always attends it; and " frequently it gives rise to a systematic defiance of all legal " authority, disgraceful to government, and to the administra- " tion of civil justice.

" I have been happy to find that the Board of Commis- " sioners have been able to realize the land revenue of the " upper provinces with extraordinary punctuality, but with " rare resort to this unpopular and injurious measure; but it is " with much regret I have learned, that through the intrigues of " the Tehsildars, at a period anterior to their administration, " large portions of the three districts of Goruckpore, Cawn- " pore, and Allahabad, had been transferred from the hands of " original proprietors by public sale for the arrears of rent, and " that particularly in the former district, *very valuable vil-* " *lages had been frequently sold at a price of from two to* " *five rupees.*" (This would indeed be incredible, if it did not proceed from such high authority.) " The purchasers were " generally the Tehsildars themselves; and even to the present " day, the local authorities lament the consequence of the op- " pression which ensued, nor have their united efforts yet " been able to arrest the course of its injurious effects.

" The auction purchasers are generally the Vakeels, the " Omlah, (officers of the courts of justice) and dependants of " the courts and other cutcheries, who have acquired their " notions of property from the regulations, or from the Bengal " practice, and who proceed to take possession of their purchase " with the conception that no one has any right but them- " selves."—Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 420.

gust, 1822; at which time Regulation VII. A. D. 1822, was passed, by which the settlement of the lands then existing was extended for five years longer.

Ceded and Conquered Provinces. — Revenue settlements.

In the Fifth Report we have no separate statement of the Jumma of the "Conquered "Provinces," at the time of their coming into possession of the Company; but in the third volume of the "Selections from India "Records" above mentioned, page 158, we have a statement of the total receipts from the "Ceded and Conquered provinces" united for a period of twelve years, or from 1807-8 to 1818-19 inclusive. This statement still leaves us in ignorance of the actual legal Jumma of these districts at the time of their cession; but the first year of this statement, or 1807-8, probably exceeds the original Jumma: being the last year of the first triennial period abovementioned, in which the revenues were intended to be annually augmenting. Whatever may have been the case, however, previously to 1807-8, the annual increase for the twelve subsequent years, is enormous. The *gross* receipts of 1818-19 exeeeded those of 1807-8, in the sum of 11,066,675 rupees; whilst the aggregate *net* receipts of the whole period, exceeded the net receipt of the first year of the period in no less a sum than

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Revenue settlements.

80,023,583 rupees, or about ten million sterling from these districts alone.* In the lan-

* The reader will probably understand the statement in the text more clearly by seeing it stated in figures. The following will shew the difference of gross receipts between the first and last years of the period alluded to, viz.

	1807-8.	1818-19.	Difference.
Land	21,888,040	31,492,575	9,604,535
Sayer	775,923	1,132,798	356,870
Customs	1,443,512	2,588,782	1,105,270
Total Rps.	24,147,475	35,214,150	11,066,675

The following is extracted from the general figured statement referred to in the text, to shew the annual increase in each year on the Jumma 1807-8.

Years.	Total net receipts of land revenue, Sayer and Customs.	Annual increase on 1807-8.
1807-8	19,426,787	
1808-9	20,776,220	1,349,433
1809-10	23,792,230	4,365,443
1810-11	26,112,066	6,685,279
1811-12	25,703,280	6,276,493
1812-13	25,010,147	5,583,360
1813-14	28,230,282	8,803,495
1814-15	26,817,124	7,390,337
1815-16	27,536,492	8,099,705
1816-17	30,291,701	11,864,914
1817-18	28,431,204	9,004,417
1818-19	31,427,494	12,000,707
	Rupees	80,023,583

guage of the East this would be called a Russud Jumma, or revenue progressively increasing. It is the process usually observed for reaching that enviable goal termed "standard "assessment," or fixing what is called a "moderate Jumma."

The reader will now please to recollect that all these arrangements were made in profound ignorance of the real resources of the country; that they had no better groundwork than mere conjectural estimate, or the fabricated accounts of districts and villages, or an average of revenue collections from the country by former Aumils and farmers — in other words, a practical illustration of the doctrine of the learned Shums-ul-Aymah-us-Surukhsee, who lays it down as sound law (*page* **319**) that cultivators are only entitled, out of the annual produce of land, to what may be indispensable for their support till the next crop be reaped — to which we simply superadded the principle of a Russud Jumma, as above described, guarding, in pure love to a poor and starving population, against the possibility of their getting rich!

We will now proceed to enquire how these matters were conducted under the Madras government; where other systems were put in practice, and supported with a degree of

Ceded and Conquered Provinces. — Revenue settlements.

zeal, ability, and perseverance, certainly not surpassed, and perhaps not equalled in any other part of India; and where it is consequently of greater importance to trace the operation of these systems to their ultimate result.

SECTION IX.

FORT ST. GEORGE—REVENUE SYSTEMS.

In consequence of express orders from the Court of Directors, and the government-general, the permanent settlement was introduced into some of the provinces subject to Fort St. George, about the beginning of the present century; with the same system as in Bengal for the administration of justice. But the inquiries made under this presidency into the state of the land revenues, and tenures, give a better view of revenue details, and a deeper insight into the state and condition of the native inhabitants than is to be found elsewhere. On this account a brief review of the different systems adopted is necessary. They constitute, in fact, the great sin of the Company's government in India, as being confirmative of that poverty, and stationary degradation, of the native population which ages of despotic

power would seem to have inflicted, as a perpetual inheritance, on this devoted country.

Modes of assessing or valuing land, and division of produce.

In previous pages (**293** to **317**) an analysis is given of the celebrated Tumar Jumma so often applauded, and referred to, in the Bengal records. In other parts of the country, although the farming system seems to have been as universal, as in Bengal; it was still usual to collect the revenues from the Ryots, whether through the intervention of farmers, or directly by the officers of government, according to annual settlements made with the Ryots—that is, according to an estimated valuation of the harvest, on actual inspection of the crops, in each year; or by partition after gathering.

It is of so much importance that the reader should be thoroughly acquainted with the groundwork of our Indian systems of revenue, that I must again entreat his patience, whilst I submit a few details taken from official records, as to the mode of proceeding in districts subject to the government of Fort St. George; and which we either conquered, or obtained by cession, from Mussulman powers.

We here commonly find two descriptions of land; one called Zemindary lands, or lands in the occupancy of Zemindars or Polygars; and Havelly lands, or lands under the immediate management of government, without the

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intervention of Zemindars, Jaghiredars, or other intermediate agents.

In the Zemindary lands it was usual to allow the Zemindars to appropriate the revenues to their own use, on their paying a certain sum to government, as stipulated in a Cowle or written engagement. The Zemindars were therefore renters or farmers of their respective Zemindaries; having the entire management of the revenue and police given up to them; and exercising absolute dominion, even to life and death. They collected the revenues from the Ryots either in kind, or money, or, as was almost universally the case, by subletting the lands to farmers on annual, or longer leases. With the powers which these Zemindars exercised — always difficult and sometimes impossible to controul — no knowledge could be obtained by the officers of government of the real resources of the country. The Zemindars, fertile in expedients, defeated every attempt to acquire it, or opposed the interposition of government by force of arms. One of their expedients, if not remarkable for its honesty, displayed at least a considerable share of cunning. At the expiration of every lease, there was sure to be a heavy balance. This was reserved to aid in the negotiations for a

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new lease, as the Zemindars would generally agree, in the event of the lease being renewed to themselves, to pay up the arrear; which, on the other hand, would be wholly lost, if the lease were granted to another.

In the Havelly lands, sundry modes of management prevailed. In some instances, a settlement, called Aumanee, was adopted; according to which, government receives its share of the produce of the lands from each cultivator in kind, or the value of that share at a price agreed upon. Under this system it was necessary to keep up a large establishment of native officers, who generally combined with the inhabitants of most power and influence, to defraud the state of its rights. It was, therefore, of all others, most open to abuse; and attended not only with loss to government, but often with great oppression to such of the Ryots as were not members of the conspiracy.

Another method, and by far the most common for many years after our possession of territory in India, was to let out the lands to farmers of the revenue; in large or small divisions, according to circumstances; and on annual or longer leases. Farming of the revenues became thus a regular profession, on

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which the Fifth Report remarks—"the unqualified conveyance, by government itself, of most of its powers to these large speculating renters, necessarily conferred on them the most ample means of oppression, and appears to have occasioned, but in a still greater degree, the unjust and vicious system of internal administration which existed in the Zemindary lands."*

The collectors in some of the Havelly lands had recourse to another method; which was to settle with the head inhabitants of villages for the revenue of the whole village, leaving to them to sublet the lands, and arrange with each cultivator for the rent he was to pay. These village settlements were founded on government's share of the annual produce, commuted for a money payment, regulated with reference to the market price of grain; but, although conformable in some respects to the habits and usages of the natives, it has been objected to these settlements, that they were of an imperfect kind, not founded on a survey of the lands, consequently in ignorance of the village resources, and of the rights and privileges of the Ryots; neither were Pottahs

* 5th Rep. p. 83.

granted to the Ryots; or any other systematic precaution taken, to guard them against oppression on the part of the head inhabitants.

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In respect to the division of produce, it is stated, that "by the custom of the Hindoo "government, the cultivators were entitled to "one half of the paddy produce (that is grain "in the husk), depending on the periodical "rains. Of the crops from the dry grain "lands, watered by artificial means, the share "of the cultivator was about two thirds."* These shares were settled in each year before harvest, on inspection of the crops, after usual deductions for the use of Pagodas, and other local purposes before noticed, by persons appointed for the purpose, and in the presence of the inhabitants and village servants. If the Ryots were dissatisfied, they were at liberty to make another survey, or estimate, by persons of their own chusing; and if any material difference appeared between the two estimates, a third account was taken, under the orders of the village officers. Garden lands or plantations, were assessed at rates varying from one-fourth to one-eighth of the entire yearly crop,

* 5th Rep. p. 81.

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according to the expense and time required for bringing certain products to maturity; and the distance or proximity of markets; and these assessments were fixed in money.

Such is an outline of the principles of revenue administration in the Madras provinces previous to the introduction of those systems, which will be hereafter described. At this time the lands were commonly classed under three denominations, viz.

Nunjah, or wet lands—that is, constantly irrigated—in which the produce was divided between the government and cultivator—or the government share commuted into a money payment.

Punjah, or dry grain lands—that is, lands dependant on rain, or dew, only for irrigation; and which were either assessed in money, at so much for a fixed measure of land, but varying with the produce; or on inspection of the annual crops as abovementioned.

Baghayut, or gardens or plantations—in which the most valuable articles of produce are raised; and which were also assessed at fixed money rates.

The Nunjah lands depending on copious irrigation, and the fall of the rains at the usual season being uncertain, the produce was

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equally so; on which account the Ryots preferred the method of dividing produce with the government, and always objected to a fixed money rate on the lands; which, from its excessive amount, they might, in bad seasons, be unable to pay.

The Punjah culture was less exposed to failure from requiring only partial supplies of water. The risk therefore of engaging for a money payment was less. A division of crops, too, on these lands would be attended with difficulty, as many of the articles cultivated on the same ground ripened at different seasons of the year.

The Baghayut lands, containing the most valuable articles of produce, were generally secured against failure of water by artificial means; so that the payment of a money rate on these lands was still less liable to objection.

That these rules were of ancient origin, I admit, and that they are commonly found to exist in native records and registers; but it is obvious that they could not be precisely applied to every description, and every variety of land. It is probable that principles of this kind were from time immemorial adopted in the division of produce, or adjustment of rents, between the former proprietors of es-

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tates and their tenants: and, subsequently, under the Mussulman government, between Zemindars and Ryots; but that they were ever practically enforced, for the collection of *revenue*, by any *ancient* Hindoo government, I must be allowed to doubt, if not to deny, for reasons which will plainly enough appear in many parts of this treatise, and more particularly in the second chapter.

The select Committee of the House of Commons, state these to be the lawful rights of the Ryots, according to the ancient usage of the country; and then go on to remark,* that "in consequence of the changes introduced "by the Mahommedan conquest, and the "many abuses which later times had esta- "blished, the share really enjoyed by the "Ryots was often reduced to a *sixth*, and but "seldom exceeded a *fifth;* for, instead of the "former usage, the expedient of an impost "originally founded on a measurement of the "arable land, and of additional assessments "in proportion to that impost was generally "adopted, *and the amount of such additional* "*assessments had no bounds but those which* "*limited the supposed ability of the husband-* "*man.* In those parts of the country, where

* 5th Rep. p. 82.

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" the practice of receiving the rents in kind, " or by a monied valuation of the actual pro- " duce, still obtained, the cultivators were " reduced to an equally unfavourable situation " by the arbitrary demands and contributions, " to which they were subjected, beyond the " stipulated rent. The effects of this unjust " system were considerably augmented by the " custom, which had become common with " the Zemindars, of subrenting their lands to " farmers, whom they armed with unrestricted " powers of collection, and who were thus en- " abled to disregard, whenever it suited their " purpose, the engagements they entered into " with the Ryots; besides practising every " species of oppression which unfeeling self- " interest could suggest. If they agreed with " the cultivators, at the commencement of the " year, for a rent in money, and the season " proved an abundant one, they then insisted on " receiving their dues in kind. When they " did take their rents in specie, they hardly " ever failed to collect a part of them before " the harvest time had arrived, and the crops " were cut; which reduced the Ryots to the " necessity of borrowing from money lenders " at a heavy interest of three, four and five per " cent. per month, the sums requisite to make " good the anticipated payments that were

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" demanded of them. If, from calamity or " other cause, the Ryots were the least remiss " in the discharge of their rents, the officers " of the renters were instantly quartered upon " them; and these officers they were obliged " to maintain, until they might be recalled, " on the demand being satisfied. It was also " a frequent practice with the renters to re- " move the inhabitants from fertile lands in " order to bestow them on their friends and " favourites; and to oblige the Ryots to as- " sist them, when they happened to be far- " mers, in the tilling of their lands, and to " furnish them gratuitously with labourers, " bullocks, carts and straw.

" In addition to the assessment on the " lands, or the shares of their produce re- " ceived from the inhabitants, they were sub- " ject to the duties levied on the inland trade, " which were collected by the renters under " the Zemindars. These duties, which went " by the name of Sayer, as they extended to " grain, cattle, salt, and all the other neces- " saries of life passing through the country, " and were collected by corrupt, partial and " extortionate agents, produced the worst " effects on the state of society, by not only " checking the progress of industry, oppress- " ing the manufacturer, and causing him to

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" debase his manufacture, but also by clog-
" ging the beneficial operations of commerce
" in general, and abridging the comforts of
" the people at large. This latter descrip-
" tion of imposts was originally considered as
" a branch of revenue too much exposed to
" abuses, to be entrusted to persons not liable
" to restraint and punishment. It was there-
" fore retained under the immediate manage-
" ment of the government. The first rates
" were easy, and the custom houses few; but
" in the general relaxation of authority, this
" mode of raising revenue for the support of
" government was scandalously abused. In
" the course of a little time, new duties were
" introduced under the pretence of charitable
" and religious donations, as fees to the Cho-
" keydars, or account keepers, guards, and
" other officers at the stations, as protection
" money to a Zemindar; or as a present to
" those who farmed the duties. Not only
" had the duties been from time to time raised
" in their amount, and multiplied in their
" number, at the discretion of the Zemindars,
" and the renters under them; but they were
" at length levied at almost every stage, and
" on every successive transfer of property —
" uniformity in the principles of collection
" was completely wanting; a different mode

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" of taxation prevailing in every district, in " respect to all the varieties of goods, and " other articles, subject to impost. This con- " suming system of oppression had in some " instances been aggravated by the Company's " government; which, when possessed of a " few factories with a small extent of terri- " tory around them, adopted the measure of " placing Chokies or custom stations, in the " vicinity of each, for the purpose of ascer- " taining the state of trade within their own " limits, as well as to afford them a source of " revenue. Under the head of Sayer revenue, " was also included a variety of taxes, inde- " finite in their amount, and vexatious in their " nature, called Moterpha; they consisted of " imposts on houses, on the implements of " agriculture, on looms, on merchants, on ar- " tificers, and other professions and casts."

Again—speaking of the Company's administration in reference to the Nunjah, Punjah, and Baghayut lands above described, the select committee observe—" The demand on " the cultivator was, however, by no means " confined to the established rates of land tax " or rent; for besides the Sayer duties and " taxes, personal and professional, the Ryot " was subject to extraordinary aids, additional " assessments, and to the private exactions of

" the officers of government, or renters, and " their people; so that what was left to the " Ryot was little more than what he was en- " abled to secure by evasion and conceal- " ment."*

In these extracts the reader will perceive the opinions of men, whose impartiality cannot be doubted, as to the practical operation of Indian systems of finance. He will also keep in mind that, in all countries in which we succeeded to the Mussulman power, the same system has been continued; the same methods resorted to of collecting the revenues through the medium of Renters, or farmers general, Zemindars, Aumeens, Potails, &c.; that we always looked to the realization of as large an amount of revenue as our predecessors had extracted from the lands; and sometimes a much greater; and he may thence, as well as from the facts contained in this treatise, draw his own conclusions, as to whether the state and condition of the people could be ameliorated (however good or sincere our intentions) with the continuance universally of such powerful causes of demoralization.

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* 5th Rep. p. 117.

SECTION X.

THE JAGHIRE.*

FORT ST. GEORGE. — Revenue settlements. The Jaghire.

The "ancient possessions" as they are called, of the East India Company, subject to the presidency of Fort St. George, are the Jaghire, and the Northern Circars. The Jaghire was granted to us in 1750, and further confirmed in 1763, by the Nabob of Arcot. Until the year 1780, it was rented by the Nabob; whose management of it is represented to have been oppressive and ruinous in the extreme; and of the same character which marked his administration of the rest of the Carnatic. "It exhibited throughout a scene "of boundless exaction and rapacity, on the "part of government and its officers; of eva- "sion on that of the inhabitants; or of col- "lusion between them and the public ser- "vants; while the revenue diminished every "year with the cultivation. The husband- "man was entitled to a certain standard share "of the crop; but a considerable portion of "it was extorted from him, under the varied "devices of *usual assessment—fixed assess-*

* A district in the immediate vicinity of Madras, or Fort St. George, now called Chingleput, about 108 miles long and 47 broad in the widest part, containing altogether 2440 square miles. (Hamilton.)

" *ment—additional assessment* — and *Durbar* " *Khirch*; and by private contributions levied " by the revenue officers for their own use."

The Jaghire was twice invaded by Hyder Ali; once in 1768, and again in 1780. In the latter, more especially, fire and sword seemed to contend for pre-eminence in the work of havoc and destruction. At the close of the war in 1784, the country exhibited few signs of having been inhabited, save in the bones of murdered bodies, or the naked walls of villages and temples—the melancholy remains of almost universal conflagration. To the miseries of a desolating war, succeeded a famine. Death, and emigration, had thus nearly depopulated the whole country; and to these multiplied calamities was now superadded a revenue administration, the basis of which was the exaction of a land tax, from the wretched remaining inhabitants, equal to one half the gross produce of the soil!

After the Company's government had assumed the Jaghire in 1780, their management of it does not appear to have been more prosperous than that of the Nabob. In 1783, it was let out, in fourteen large farms, on leases of nine years. We have above seen what the character of native farmers is. In

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1788, the plan had completely failed. The revenue realized did not exceed one-fourth of the valuation in the Nabob's grant. The estates of the renters or farmers were sequestered, and several of them imprisoned.

From 1788 to 1794, the country was let out in smaller portions, on leases of three years. The net revenue was thus somewhat increased; but the extreme necessities of government often obliged them to require of the lessees to pay down sums of money in advance of their instalments; leaving them to reimburse themselves from the inhabitants, as they could.

In 1794, the country was committed to the management of Mr. Lionel Place; from whose vigorous and efficient administration, until 1798, a more accurate knowledge of the state of the inhabitants was obtained than of any other part of the Company's old possessions; and a greater revenue than had been received from it since the grant by the Nabob.

Pending the distractions from 1780 to 1784, a race of persons, termed "Dubashes," had established themselves in the Jaghire; by buying up the rights of the starving inhabitants for a few days', or a few weeks', subsistence. The Dubashes having thus obtained a footing, strove at first to supplant the influence of

the Company's government in the province, in order to extend and confirm their own; but they were put down by the vigour of Mr. Place's administration; who succeeded in restoring many of the old landholders, and heads of villages, &c. to their former rights; and by his vigilance and controul, introduced greater order into the collection of the revenues.

In the Jaghire, however, as in every other district of the Company's possessions, Mr. Place found great disorder and confusion in the revenue accounts:—"*Where they were to be met* "*with, they were found to be mere fabrications,* "*intended to conceal the peculations and irregu-* "*lar practices, as well of the accountants them-* "*selves, as of those employed in the collections,*" whilst all the village servants not only connived at abuses in others, but abused their own trusts in every way that could serve their private views, or promote those of their superiors in the district.

Mr. Place introduced the system of village settlements; that is, letting the lands of each village separately to the principal landholders of the village for a specified money rent; leaving them to settle among themselves with minor occupants. The revenues of the Jaghire continued to be realized on annual village settlements from 1789 to 1802-3; when the

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lands were all made subject to the terms of the permanent Zemindary tenure.

According to the system adopted at Madras, the Jaghire was divided into sixty-one estates, bearing an assessment of from 2000 to 5000 Pagodas each; and *sold* to the highest bidder; the Company assuming the right of sale, in virtue of their other assumed right of being, as sovereign, sole proprietors of the soil. From the above described state of the Jaghire, ever since it came into our possession, it was impossible that any thing like a correct valuation of the lands could be obtained. The tax, therefore, fixed on these estates was calculated on certain accounts of the gross collections in former years; whilst some estates were assessed at increasing rates of rent, which were to become fixed after a certain number of years — that is, assessed at once at a permanent Jumma, which it was thought proper to estimate the country might at a future period yield.

SECTION XI.

NORTHERN CIRCARS.

About the same time, or in 1802 and 1804, the permanent settlement was introduced into the other branch of the Company's "ancient

possessions," commonly called the "Northern Circars."* When the Circars came into our possession, in 1765, by grant from the Moghul, afterwards confirmed by the Nizam of the Deccan, it was found that large portions of these countries, called the Zemindary lands, were occupied by Zemindars, the descendants of former landholders in Telingana and Orissa, who had been driven, by the severities of Mahommedan rule, from their possessions in those provinces. They had, all, forts, and an armed force for their defence, and were therefore more like tributary chiefs than subjects; the more powerful using their force, as opportunities favoured, to swallow up minor Zemindaries, to extend their possessions and power, and uniformly to encroach on those of the Company. The spirit of independence and refractoriness, which any pretence would call into action, was never broken in these districts; neither were the turbulent chieftains ever completely disarmed, or made duly obedient to the authority of the civil government. Down to the period of the introduction of the permanent settlement, the country was not subject to any fixed principle of revenue management. The

* Namely, Chicacole, Rajahmundry, Ellore, and Condapilly.

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Zemindary lands were let to the Zemindars, and, for the most part, left to their administration. Village settlements* were made with the principal inhabitants in the Havelly lands, i. e. those more immediately subject to the management of the Company; but it does not appear that any precautions were taken to guard the lower orders from the oppression of Zemindars, Renters, and others in power; or to ascertain the rights and privileges of Ryots, or the dues of government; the minutiæ of revenue investigation being everywhere left to native Dewans and Dubashes.† It is true that a change of system took place in the administration of these districts in 1794, and some improvement, it is said, may be traced subsequently to that period;‡ but what with the want of local vigilance and knowledge, the great misconduct of some of the collectors, the intrigues of the native servants, and their

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* *Vide pages* 408 *and* 421.

† Dewan — is often used to designate the principal revenue servant under an European collector. Dubash — properly an interpreter, or speaker of two languages. At Madras he is the manager of the money concerns of Europeans, and confidential agent in their transactions with other natives.

‡ Fifth Report, p. 100.

combinations with Zemindars and others to falsify accounts, it does not appear that the benefits of the change were of any great amount, or that any material progress was made in investigating the revenue concerns of the country.

Such, however, was the state of these and the adjoining Guntoor Circar,* when the permanent settlement was introduced. The value of the lands was fixed on a former *estimate* of their produce from 1783 to 1788; or, where the valuation was supposed to be under-rated, on an average of collections made since that period, and on local accounts. With this *estimate*, and on the principle that the Jumma, or land revenue, to be paid by the Zemindar to government should be two-thirds of the gross collections from the cultivators, the Zemindary lands were parcelled out into estates of from 1000 to upwards of 100,000 Pagodas annual Jumma, and bestowed in proprietary right on the Zemindars; whilst the Havelly lands were divided into *Mootahs*† (farms) or estates of 1000

* The Guntoor Circar had at this time been for thirteen years subject to the British authority.

† Hence the term *Mootahdary* applied to this system at Madras.

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to 5000 Pagodas each, and *sold* at public auction, subject to the terms of the permanent Zemindary tenure.

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In this, as well as the permanent settlement of the Jaghire, we have a remarkable instance of property in the soil being deemed, according to the Mussulman doctrine, an universal attribute of sovereignty. The Havelly lands were all sold by the Company's government to the best bidder, as if they had been private estates; whilst the Zemindary lands were bestowed, in free gift, on persons who had no pretensions to them as hereditary proprietors; who, or their ancestors, were nothing better than military adventurers, fugitives from other countries; and who had seized and held these lands throughout all the convulsions of the Mussulman government, subsequent to the death of Aurungzebe in 1707, till the whole system of internal administration had become so disorganized that, on the transference of the Circars to the British government in 1765, it is observed, "not only the forms but even the "remembrance of civil authority seemed to be "wholly lost."

From 1765 to 1804 we have no great reason to believe from the printed records that the condition of the inhabitants was mate-

rially improved under the Company's administration. Exaction of revenue by any means—yet in perfect ignorance of the real resources of the country—presents itself throughout as the main feature; and to such excess was this carried, that when the permanent settlement was established, the revenue board assure us that the "Havelly lands in "the Northern Circars, were in many cases "assessed at the highest amount of the as- "certained collections of an average of years, "and in some few cases at a higher amount "than any traceable average of collections."* Notwithstanding this high assessment, speculators and adventurers were still found willing to purchase; and estates were thus actually transferred for a price to the highest bidders, without regard to the rights of the local Meerassydars,† and other descriptions of landholders.

Of the refractory chieftains abovementioned, it is remarked, in a letter from the government of Fort St. George to the Court of Directors, dated 9th May, 1793, "It is now near thirty

* Madras Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 518.

† Meerassydar—holder or possessor of a heritage—proprietor of land. Of these persons more will be said in the sequel.

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" years since the Company became possessed " of the Circars, and at this moment their influ- " ence is very little, if at all, better established " than it was the first day. The Zemindars " still keep the same troops and exercise the " same authority within their respective dis- " tricts. The oppressions they commit are, " we believe, in no degree abated; and their " engagements to the Company are as ill per- " formed as they have been at any period." Down to the year 1804, it moreover appears that, with the exception of one principal Zemindar, Vizieram Rause, who had been subdued, no decisive measures had been taken to oblige the great landholders to reduce their military retainers. Stipulations, it is true, had been introduced into the Cowles, or leases, granted to the Zemindars for a limitation of the number of their armed followers, but these stipulations were nugatory in their effect. These, however, were the persons on whom the Zemindaries in question were settled as perpetual estates. It is consequently obvious, that the permanent settlement was introduced into the Circars in perfect ignorance, on our part, of the real resources of the country. Of the value of our gifts we knew nothing; neither can we discover what were the merits which entitled

these Zemindars to such magnificent gratuities.*

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According to the arrangement thus adopted, as well for the Circars as the Jaghire, it was calculated that the Ryot's share of the gross produce would be one half, the other half being paid to the Zemindar, or Mootahdar, of which government claimed, as Jumma or revenue, two-thirds, leaving one-third of the gross collections, or about 15 per cent. of the gross produce, to the Zemindar, on whom the charges of collection also rested, the government share being a net payment.

If the real value of the lands in Bengal and Madras had been accurately ascertained, this might be deemed a striking difference, in favour of the Madras Zemindars, in the general division of produce; but as the valuation of the lands was obviously vague and uncertain, it may be nearer the truth to conclude that the government share was, in both cases, the utmost that could be exacted from the payers of the tax.

Another, however, and still more important difference may here be noticed. Both the Court of Directors, and the Bengal govern-

* For an account of these countries at the period alluded to, see the Fifth Report, pp. 77—100, and the vouchers there referred to.

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Permanent settlement.

Ancient possessions.

ment, had enjoined that the grants to Zemindars should be made with an express reservation in favour of the rights of Ryots, Talookdars, and other individuals, as those rights might be ascertained. In the settlement under Madras, though the Zemindars are declared to be the proprietors of their estates, both waste and cultivated, still the cultivated *land*, it is added, *could in no case be sold.** In the event of arrears, the Zemindar's share of the produce only, 15 per cent., could be sold for payment of the arrear; the proprietary right of the Zemindar being limited, as would appear, to this 15 per cent. and to the waste lands of the estate, both of which, but only these—on the principle of proprietary right—could he bequeath, mortgage, or alienate.

The Jumma, or revenue, thus secured to government was exclusive of all receipts from the sale and manufacture of salt; from Sayer and all other duties; from Abkary, or tax on spirits and drugs; and from all taxes personal and professional; government reserving these taxes to itself, and the entire exercise of its discretion in respect to their continuance, or abolition.

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* Fifth Report, pp, 111, 112. 115.

It was also stipulated, as a fundamental condition, that the Zemindars should no longer be suffered to keep up a military force, or interfere with the police.

SECTION XII.

OTHER POSSESSIONS UNDER FORT ST. GEORGE.

Modern possessions.

The other territorial possessions under the Madras government are—

1. Baramahl, Dindigul, and Malabar, ceded by Tippoo Sultaun in March, 1792; Malabar continued under the Bombay government till 1800.
2. Pondicherry and its adjacent lands, from the French in 1793; and Pulicat and Sadras, from the Dutch in 1795.
3. Canara, Soonda, Coimbetoor, Circar lands and Pollams of Balaghaut, and the island of Seringapatam, by partition treaty with the Nizam and Paishwa, in 1799. Tanjore was ceded to the Company by the Raja in the same year.
4. Ceded districts, with some additions to Malabar and Carnatic, in 1800.
5. Remainder of the Carnatic, consisting of Pulnaud, Nellore, Ongole, Arcot, Pollams

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Modern possessions.

of Chitoor, and districts of Satevaid, Tinnevelly, and Madura in 1801.

N.B. Of the Southern and Western Pollams—parts of the Carnatic—the Company had collected the Peishcush, or tribute, ever since 1792, by treaty with the Nabob. In 1795, the Pollam of Ramnaud, was made over to their exclusive management.

Southern Pollams, short account of, previous to 1803-4.

In the southern parts of the Peninsula we find a class of persons termed Polygars; who may be likened, in point of character and condition, to the Northern Zemindars; whilst the districts, or provinces, in the hands of the Polygars, are called Pollams. The Polygars, like their brethren in the North, were originally military adventurers, or leaders of banditti, or police or revenue officers employed under former governments; and who, availing themselves of times of weakness or distress, or the absence of a controlling force, established themselves in sufficient power in their respective districts to make it convenient, if not obligatory, on the superior government to recognize their usurpations; and to be satisfied with certain tributes from the territories they respectively held, under the denomination of Peishcush. Each Polygar, in proportion to the extent of his jurisdiction and

Southern Pollams, short account of, previous to 1803-4.

power, had forts and military retainers; and exercised, within his own limits, all the powers of an Asiatic despot. Some of these possessed lands, in virtue of ancient grants from former sovereigns, for services rendered. Others succeeded in usurping lands, or conquering, or wresting, them from their neighbours. And inhabiting a country famed for robbers, a portion of their income was derived from fees, levied on pretence of watching, and protecting, villages and districts; and thence called Cawel Tallum (village watching fees); and Cawel Desha (district watching fees.)

Of these Polygars we have no other account than their being a turbulent refractory race; inhabiting, for the most part, countries as difficult of access, as they were consequently easy of defence; and, therefore, like despots on a greater scale, aiming not only at independence, but the extension of territory and dominion, wherever it was practicable. In the history of these Pollams, anarchy and misrule, lawless power, insurrections, civil and external wars, ravages and famines, are the most prominent features.

The districts and Pollams of the Company's "modern territory," into which the permanent settlement was introduced by the Madras government between the years 1802-3,

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Southern Pollams, short account of, previous to 1803-4.

and 1804-5, are Salem and Kistnaghery (Baramahl), Western Pollams, Southern Pollams, Chitoor Pollams, Ramnaud and Dindigul.

Of these the Fifth Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1812, gives a most detailed account of the settlement effected with the Polygars of Ramnaud, Shevagunga, and the Tinnevelly Pollams; and the Circar lands of Dindigul. A brief account of these will serve for all the other countries above named.

The Carnatic Polygars were first transferred to the Company by a treaty between Lord Cornwallis, and the Nabob of Arcot, in 1792. From this period to 1799, resistance to the authority of government, violence of all descriptions, usurpations and extortions, marked the conduct and proceedings of the Polygars. By means of heavy exactions on the country, they were enabled to support large military forces; and wherever they could collect the watching fees abovementioned, their authority over the village, or district, was permanently established. These contributions were sometimes levied on the plea of protection; and sometimes as the price of forbearing to plunder. They were made by armed Peons "detached from the "fort of the Polygar; but never regulated

" by any fixed principle; the amount de- " pended on the conscience of the Polygar, " and when the payment was resisted, or not " quietly submitted to, it was enforced by " torture and the whip; the whole village was " put into confinement; every occupation in- " terdicted; the cattle pounded; the inhabi- " tants taken captive into the Pollam lands, " or murdered; in short every species of out- " rage continued to be committed until the " object of the Polygar was accomplished."*

In this way it appears, that of 2000 villages in the province of Tinnevelly, upwards of three-fourths had been, in 1799, brought under the controul and exactions of the Polygars; which the authority of government had, down to this period, but feebly restrained.

In 1799, war commenced with Tippoo Sultaun; and our army being actively employed in Mysore was the signal for a general insurrection of the Southern Pollams. Troops were accordingly marched into Tinnevelly, with orders to destroy the forts, and disarm the Polygars—it being resolved to relieve them from military services and police duties, and to prohibit their collecting the " watching fees " in time to come—in short,

* 5th Report, p. 144-5.

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Southern Pollams, short account of, previous to 1803-4.

to reduce them, if possible, to the condition of peaceful and obedient subjects.

These objects were but imperfectly accomplished at the time: and the collector having fixed for 1799-1800, as well on the lands of the Polygars, as on those from which they had before collected the rents, a Jumma exceeding that of former years by no less than 117 per cent., several of the Polygars surrendered their lands and villages to the collector, rather than pay the Jumma at which they were rated. The collector however satisfied his own mind that the Jumma he had arranged for 1799-1800, "did not exceed the "limits of a moderate and just demand." If moderation be measured by the right of government to one-half, or three-fifths of the gross produce of the soil, as an equitable land tax, the collector's definition of a "moderate "and just demand" need not be questioned. His moderation was at all events followed, in 1801, by another rebellion of the Polygars. A military force was again detached to quell it. The orders which had been issued on the former insurrection were now effectually put in force; and the country completely brought under subjection to the civil government. On this occasion some of the chiefs were deprived of their lands; others capitally punished; and

Permanent settlement, 1803.

the collector, with his native servants, being now in full possession of the country, proceeded, in 1802, on the best information attainable, to *estimate* the real value of the lands, so as thereon to fix a permanent assessment on the principles of the Zemindary tenure. This was confirmed by the Madras government, and carried into execution in 1803. The Polygars not dispossessed in consequence of the rebellions, were here again constituted proprietors of estates; with an allowance, from the computed gross produce, of fifteen per cent.; and with all the other conditions adopted in the Northern Circars; the Company reserving to themselves, as fixed revenue, two-thirds of the estimated Jumma.

To judge accurately of the nature and principles of this permanent arrangement, it is necessary to add a few more particulars.

	Pagodas.
Previous to 1799-1800, as above mentioned; the amount of annual Peishcush, or Jumma, realized by the Company from these Pollams, was .	168,305

In 1799-1800 we have already seen that the Jumma was, by a bold rapid step, more than doubled. In 1802

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Southern Pollams.

Permanent settlement.

	Pagodas.
the proposed permanent Jumma, recommended by the collector, was .	274,692
And, in 1803, the actual permanent Jumma was fixed by a special commission at	268,101
exceeding therefore by 100,000 Pags. the former Peishcush.	
But it must be further remarked, that the Company's portion of 268,101 Pags., being only a computed two-thirds of the gross collections, the arrangement necessarily gave to the Polygars the remainder, or a specific third of this increased Jumma, or 134,050 Pags. The sum total of land rent, therefore, to be collected from the Ryots, would thus amount to 402,151 Pags. This however was not the whole; for to the aforesaid sum of land rent, or	402,151
we have to add the Sayer, salt, and Abkary duties, now resumed by government, or	21,581
and the Cawel Desha fees, also resumed by government	55,000
	478,732

All of which could only be paid by the poverty-struck Ryots, out of the annual produce of their lands. And if we deduct from this aggregate the Polygars' share, or 134,050

we have left, for the Company's clear revenue from these Pollams, the sum of 344,682

or very nearly three times the amount of the Peishcush, prior to the change of condition of the Polygars in 1799-1800. *

Now it is not to be supposed that Polygars of the character, habits, and local influence, above described, would forego one farthing of their allotted share; particularly after the loss of power to which they had so recently been obliged to submit. It was moreover an avowed principle of the Zemindary tenure that no remissions of the Company's share, or revenue, would be admitted, except in seasons of great and notorious calamity; that, on all ordinary occasions, the surplus of a good, would be expected to make up the deficiency of a bad, year; and that on any defalcation

* For the details of this settlement, vide 5th Rep. Appx. p. 892-3.

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Permanent settlement.

or arrear of the government portion, the seizure, and sale, of the Zemindary would immediately take place, to make good the deficiency. In this way the rights of government and of the Zemindar, were very prudently and carefully provided for; whilst a nominal protection only was extended to the defenceless Ryot.

From the enormous increase of the Jumma, on the occasion of introducing the permanent settlement as above stated, it is impossible to be persuaded that, as regards the Ryots, it "did not exceed the limits of a moderate and "just demand." It must have borne heavily on this patient, but unhappy race; even when most equally divided. In cases moreover of partial failure, or loss befalling one or more individual Ryots, in a village, or one or more villages in a district, (and these must, from various causes, be frequent) what remedy is there but to extract the deficiency from the spare resources of their neighbours—in other words (as must often happen) to force the strong and healthy, to supply the deficiencies of the infirm; or the diligent and industrious, those of the lazy and more profligate part of the community? For the Company's revenue must necessarily be paid. Punctuality in this respect is the Zemindar's only safety;

and as he can only raise the requisite contributions from the annual produce of the villages, he takes it from those who can pay, when those who cannot, disappoint him.

A thousand proclamations, with a thousand moral precepts tacked to each, on the advantage of husbanding resources in a good year, to provide against the casualties of a bad one, and addressed to people consigned to the lowest depths of poverty, and therefore lost to every motive that can superinduce economical or provident habits, is, in such cases, but preaching to the wind. It is true that Courts of justice are established in the Madras provinces, on the same footing as those provided for the interior of Bengal; but to refer the Ryots to their Pottah or lease, and the Zillah Court of the district, for security and protection, what is it but a mockery of justice? where to procure redress may cost the sufferer double the amount of the original injury; besides all the evils to himself and family, to be dreaded from the vengeance of an exasperated, and still powerful, chieftain, against whose exactions he had, contrary to all former usage, dared to complain.

This then is the sum of the advantages of the boasted permanent settlement. Between the years 1802-3 and 1804-5, it was intro-

Permanent settlement.

duced into the other districts abovementioned on the same principles; but founding the settlement in every case on an increased Jumma; or, as it was called, "standard rent,"—a term which really means the largest amount that can be extracted from starving Ryots; but which, in the more courteous language of the East, is described as "not exceeding the "limits of a moderate and just demand."

A remarkable instance of the application of a "standard rent" is given in the arrangement of the permanent settlement for Dindigul. This province, consisting of Circar lands, and certain forfeited or escheated Pollams, was divided into forty estates. For three years previous to 1804-5, it had been subject to an assessment, founded on an actual or pretended survey of every individual field; and this assessment intended to increase progressively for several years, until it should reach the "standard rent." Although this standard had not yet been attained, it was still taken as the basis of the permanent Jumma; the forty estates above mentioned rated accordingly; and *sold* to individuals,* subject of

* There is a sensible remark on this subject in an answer from the collector of Dindigul, (31st March, 1800) to instructions he had received regarding it—"The resolution of

course to this "standard rent." The consequence was a complete failure of the system in Dindigul. Many of the Zemindaries, in the three years succeeding the settlement, were again sold for arrears of revenue; but a considerable portion of the lands was necessarily resumed by government. The Court of Directors in their letter to Fort St. George of the 18th December, 1811,† ascribe the failure to the settlement being made on a Jumma, not as in other instances, "calcu- "lated on the average produce for a number "of years, but on an estimated rent higher "than the country had ever yielded, since it "came into the possession of the Company."

In like manner the Salem and Kistnaugherry, i. e. the Baramahl, districts were divided into 228 estates; and likewise sold, sub-

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'government (he says) to dispose of the proprietary right in "the Circar lands by sale, I conceive to be generally impracti- "cable, from the poverty of the people they expect to become "purchasers; as well as from the objections these very people "would have to *purchase a proprietary right in what pre- "scription had already made their own. The Nautumcars "(head cultivators) certainly consider the farm they culti- "vate, as their own property;* and no government save the "Mussulman appears to have considered the soil its own; or "itself at liberty to deprive the inferior subject at its will."

† Madras Rev. Selections, Vol. I. p. 489.

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Baramahl.

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ject to an assessment fixed with reference to the average of rents in preceding years, and *to the expected additional resources of waste lands.* In some other cases the rents were fixed on the principle of adding ten per cent. to the Jumma of former years. In fact it is observable of the permanent settlement, wherever introduced, that although the Jumma was, in the programme of the arrangement, declared to be a specific proportion of the produce of the lands, still collectors took very good care, in every case, to raise that proportion, or the government's share, in aggregate amount, so as to exceed, and in some instances, greatly to exceed all former realizations of revenue;—a fact, which may be taken as a sufficient comment on the terms "standard rent," "moderate Jumma," &c.

But the best evidence, or that which is likely to be least questioned, of the effects of the permanent settlement in the Madras territories generally, is given in the words of the Select Committee of 1812, and contained in the following paragraphs of their report.

"With respect to the effects of the permanent settlement in those parts of the country where it has been introduced, the few years which have since elapsed have not

Select committee's remarks on the effects of the permanent settlement.

" furnished sufficient experience to enable
" your committee to form an opinion which
" might not appear premature. *As far as re-*
" *lates to the realization of the public revenue,*
" *those effects have been favourably manifested;*
" inasmuch as it has been collected with much
" greater steadiness and regularity than was
" before experienced, since the first connexion
" of the Company with those districts. The
" committee here particularly refer to that
" large tract of territory called the Northern
" Circars. In the province of Ganjam, in
" Vizagapatam, and in Rajahmundry, com-
" prising three collectorships; a deficiency in
" the collections has occurred to a greater or
" less extent. In the Ganjam country, in-
" deed, it was found necessary in the year
" 1806-7, to grant temporary remissions to a
" greater number of the Zemindars, against
" whom arrears were outstanding, in conse-
" quence of the adverse seasons in that year;
" and in the following one measures were
" taken for *attaching a large portion of the*
" *estates preparatory to the sale of them.* And
" it further appears that the principles of the
" permanent settlement, which had been in-
" troduced into that country in the latter end
" of 1804, had been erroneously applied; and
" that it was the intention of the board of

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Select committee's remarks on the effects of the permanent settlement.

" revenue to take into consideration the ex-
" pediency of revising the settlement.* In
" the Southern Pollams of the Carnatic, it
" does not appear that any difficulty has at-
" tended the realization of the public demand,
" since the permanent assessment on the
" Polygars was first established; and in but
" one instance only in the Western Pollams.

" Your committee find that in the modern
" territories, as well as in the ancient posses-
" sions of the Company formerly denominated
" the Jaghire, but now forming the collector-
" ship of Chingleput, the permanent settle-
" ment has by no means had a satisfactory
" operation. In Dindigul it, to a consider-
" able extent, has failed three years succes-
" sively, and in two of those years, the estates
" of many Zemindars were sold to make good
" the balances against them. Extensive sales
" of land have also taken place in Salem, but
" more especially in Chingleput, *in which*

* It may be remarked, *en passant*, that these facts afford some ground for hesitation, as to the accuracy of the committee's previous remark of the revenues being collected " with greater " steadiness and regularity." Mr. Thackery, in his Memoir to Lord Wm. Bentinck, of 29th April, 1806, speaking of the Northern Circars, says " They have been forty years under our " government, and subject to continual rebellions, and defi- " ciencies of revenue, to this day."—5th Rep. Appx. p. 913.

Select committee's remarks on the effects of the permanent settlement.

" *latter collectorship, as well as in that of Din-*
" *digul, a considerable portion of the lands are*
" *in a state of assumption,* having been rented
" out by villages for three years.

" This very untoward state of things, in so
" large an extent of country, may be in some
" measure imputed to the extraordinary cala-
" mitous season in 1806-7, the effects of which
" were generally felt throughout the Madras
" possessions; *but the great efficient cause of*
" *it appears to have been errors in the assessment*
" *of the estates, by which a sufficient profit was*
" *not left to the Zemindars, to whom the lands*
" *had been conveyed, to enable them to fulfil the*
" *engagements into which they had entered; and*
" *to the rents or payments of the Ryots having*
" *been left at too high a scale,* particularly in
" the province of Dindigul. In Chingleput
" and in Salem, the revenues of which had, in
" the former, been realised under the system
" of village farming, and, in the latter, under
" the Ryotwar mode, the permanent settle-
" ment was fixed with reference to an average
" of actual collections for a series of years;
" but in Dindigul, where the Ryotwar prin-
" ciple of management had also obtained, the
" amount of the permanent settlement was
" regulated with reference to an ultimate
" survey rent from the Ryots, which had been

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Select committee's remarks on the effects of the permanent settlement.

" progressively increasing for the three years " antecedent, but which had not, when the " Zemindary settlement in perpetuity was in- " troduced, been collected. The ignorance of " speculators, without stock and capital, who " had in many instances become the pur- " chasers of the estates, appears also to have " contributed to the failure of the settlements " in question.

" The remarks of the Court of Directors in " their revenue letter to Fort St. George of " 18th December, 1811, when speaking of the " unfavourable turn of the permanent assess- " ment in Dindigul, are well deserving the " attention of the House.

Court of Directors' remarks thereon.

" It may, indeed, be observed that the dis- " appointment of an unfavourable expectation " ought not to be considered as a loss, and, " strictly speaking, this may be true, though, " to the case before us, the remark is appli- " cable only to a certain extent. The effect ' of immoderate exaction is not merely to " disable the contributor from paying the " amount of the surcharge, but, by discour- " aging his industry and impairing his pro- " ductive capital, it incapacitates him from " discharging what might have been at first " a moderate demand. A landholder, who " could without much difficulty pay 1000 Pa-

" godas rent, if assessed at 1200, may pay the " first year, but the second year he may not " be able to pay 600.

" But the most serious injury likely to " result from the errors of the description to " which we are now alluding comes from their " tendency to render our government un- " popular, by loading the subject with exor- " bitant imposts; to alienate the landholders " from a system dictated by the most benefi- " cent intentions, and which, when wisely " introduced, experience has shown, in many " respects, well adapted for the purposes for " which it was framed. It tends also to shake " the confidence of the inhabitants in the " prudence of our councils, the stability of " our measures, and the consistency of our " administration."

From these extracts we learn that, with the exception of some of the Zemindars in the northern and the Polygar lands in the southern districts, where the proprietors got their estates for nothing, the permanent settlement at Madras proved a complete failure. In the Baramahl, Dindigul, Ramnaud, and the Jaghire or Chingleput, we find, indeed, in subsequent records that other systems of revenue had been introduced, the lands or estates of

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these provinces having very generally reverted to government.

It will be recollected that the lands, or greater part thereof, in these districts, were *sold* in the first instance, subject to an excessive Jumma. It is stated, in another document, that all the lands sold in different districts, on the introduction of the permanent settlement, had realised to government near 700,000 Pagodas. How much of this sum was returned to the purchasers on the failure of the system, or resumption of their lands, I cannot tell. The Court of Directors ordered a repayment in the distressing case of Dindigul. "The sum (they observe) to "be restored will be 9950 Pagodas, which "being deducted from 14,557 Pagodas, the "total loss sustained by the proprietors for "premiums, and money paid to the collector "over and above the collections, will still "leave them sufferers to the amount of 4067 "Pagodas." Of these unfortunate speculators, it is added, that they had at this time endured two or three years' imprisonment; and, that when released, they were doomed to indigence for the remainder of their lives.*

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 491.

Permanent settlement.

Of the Baramahl district, notwithstanding it had received the benefit of a permanent settlement, a Ryotwar settlement, and a village settlement (the two latter systems will be hereafter described), its progress, ever since the year 1792, seems to have been the reverse of prosperous. I once read in the House of Commons an interesting letter from a native, written in behalf of the inhabitants of this district, and addressed to the governor of Madras (vide Speeches, p. 21.) in which are represented, in strong colours, the miseries they endured from the operation of the permanent settlement. We have also a minute by Sir Thomas Munro,* on the occasion of his visiting the district in November, 1821—that is, twenty-nine years after it came into our possession and under our management—in which the whole country is represented as in a state of deplorable disorder and oppression from high duties, excessive fines, and multifarious exactions on the part of the native officers of government; from being overrun by thieves and robbers, against whom the peaceable inhabitants could not defend themselves, having, it seems, been prohibited the use of arms; and from several Potails

* Madras Rev. Sel. vol. iii. p. 591.

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having abandoned, or been dispossessed of, their villages, owing to the severity of the Jumma. With facts like these prominently conspicuous on the public records, it is only credulity itself that can place confidence in the representations sometimes made to us, even from authority, of the good government of India, and the great happiness and prosperity of the people.

ordered to be discontinued

Meanwhile, or in the year 1804, the Court of Directors had despatched restrictive orders to the government of Madras against proceeding with irreversible assessments on the lands, before the fullest information had been acquired of their real resources; and, in subsequent despatches, ordered all lands under the permanent tenure which should be brought to public sale, to be bought in on account of government. The permanent settlement was consequently arrested at Madras, with the arrangements above adverted to. The other districts of this presidency were, at this time, collected and managed under Ryotwar settlements; and as the Ryotwar, or Kulwar, settlement has been highly vaunted by its advocates, and since ordered to be generally adopted at Madras, I shall next proceed to give a short account of this celebrated system.

SECTION XIII.

RYOTWAR, OR KULWAR, SETTLEMENT.*

FORT ST. GEORGE.
Ryotwar settlement.

The Ryotwar settlement was first adopted by Captain, afterwards Colonel, Read, when collector, in 1792, of Baramahl; and, from its alleged success there, was gradually extended to other districts under Madras. The great patron and advocate of Ryotwar settlements was the late Sir Thomas Munro. As the system introduced by him in the Ceded Districts is supposed to have attained its highest degree of perfection, I shall confine myself to a description of it in that collectorship, where it has been observed, that "all the intellect, "all the accounts, and all the experience of

* These terms are used synonymously. Ryotwar means according to, or with, Ryots; Kulwar, according to all, general. "A Ryotwar or Kulwar settlement is a settlement made by "government immediately with the Ryots individually, under "which the government receives its dues in the form of a "money rent fixed on the land itself in cultivation, and not "being a pecuniary commutation for its share of the produce, "varying as the extent of the produce may vary in each year. "It differs, therefore, from an Aumanee settlement, by which "the government receives its dues in kind from each culti-"vator."—*Fifth Report, Glossary.*

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Ryotwar settlement.

"the country were drawn out to assist the "collector in forming the survey."

The Ryotwar settlement, in its complete state, like the Tumar Jumma, professes to be a survey, or measurement by surveyors, and also a valuation by assessors, of every acre of land, productive or unproductive, cultivated or waste, within the limits of the collectorship, excepting only mountains and barren rocks.

The instructions to surveyors and assessors are among the most notable parts of this record; they descend to minutiæ, some of which are almost ludicrous; whilst to execute them requires a kind of micrographical genius with which one man in a million is hardly gifted. But such is the magic of a Ryotwar survey, that every person employed in it is supposed to know every thing, without even the trouble of learning.

It would be tiresome to enumerate all the absurd details of these instructions.* I shall notice a few of the heads, to give an idea of the principles of the system, and of the duties required to be performed.

The cultivated lands were ordered to be classed into dry, wet, and garden lands; each

* The reader will find these instructions at full length in the Appendix to the Fifth Report, p. 787.

was then to be measured field by field, and marked 1, 2, 3, &c. Each field to consist of as much land as could be cultivated by one plough, and the boundaries thereof to be fixed and marked by the surveyors. No deduction was to be allowed for land in a field, shaded by *productive* trees; but for land shaded by *unproductive* trees, a deduction was admitted.

Forts, suburbs, open villages, court-yards of houses, with the number and species of trees in each, banks of tanks, rivers, nullahs, ravines, hillocks, roads, barren land, wells, salt mounds, and topes or groves, with the number and species of trees in each, were all required to be particularised.

In palmira topes or groves, the trees were ordered to be classed into male and female, young, productive, and old or past bearing.

The same was to be done in garden lands generally, taking care to notice the number of plants of young trees, and to specify whether they are cocoa-nut, soopari, tamarind, jamoon, lime, orange, &c.; and likewise to enter all plantations of betel, sugar-cane, tobacco, red pepper, &c.

In the prosecution of this work the surveyors were required to measure and survey daily—

Ryotwar settlement.

" *Of dry lands,*

Goontas,* or chains.

" If cultivated 5000

" If Sayeh Bunjer, or uncultivated land, divided into fields 6500

" If Anade Bunjer, or undivided waste or common 25000

" *Of wet land,*

" If cultivated 1500

" If uncultivated . . . . . 2500"

Unauthorised Enaums,† extra collections, land, and articles of village taxes, suppressed in the accounts, were also to be inquired into and reported, with rewards annexed to every instance of fraud of this description that should be detected.

The assessors were ordered to follow the footsteps of the surveyors, and to class the lands surveyed according to *rates* to be settled in each village, with the aid of the Potail, Curnum, and Ryots; specifying also the colour of the soil, of which it is stated the country contained six different kinds of black

* Forty Goontas are equal to one English acre.

† Enaum—present, gift, gratuity, favour. Enaums are grants of land free of rent, or assignments of the government's share of the produce of a portion of land, for the support of religious establishments and priests, and for charitable purposes; also to revenue officers and the public servants of a village.—Fifth Report, Glossary.

earth, and three of red. Of the classes it is observed that they may be as numerous as the different kinds of land are; but, in one village, the assessor was instructed not to make more than ten classes of dry; six of garden; and eight of wet. He was also ordered to proceed in classing the lands according to the following tables—or "according to their "*rates*;" but the precise meaning of the latter term, not being clearly defined, I can only give the tables in the principal collector's own words and figures.

"DRY, AT HALF CANTERAI FANAM* DIFFERENCE FOR EACH RATE.

"Rate,†	Acres.	Canterai Pagodas, Rate per acre.
"1	100	1 0 0
"2	50	0 9 8
"3	40	0 9 0
"4		0 8 8
"5		0 8 0
"6		0 7 8
"7		0 7 0
"8		0 6 8
"9		0 6 0
"10		0 5 8
"11		0 5 0
"12	50	0 4 8
"13	40	0 4 0

* The following tables are stated in Canterai Pagodas, Fanams, and Annas. 1 Canterai Pagoda=10 Fanams, and 1 Fanam=16 Annas.

† For "Rate" in this column, the Rev. Board have substituted the word "Classes."—Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 920.

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" Rate.	Acres.	Rate per Acre, C.P.
" 14	50	0 3 8
" 15	40	0 3 0
" 16	30	0 2 8
" 17		0 2 0
" 18		0 1 8
" 19	50	0 1 0
" 20		0 0 0

" BAGAYET (*Garden Lands*) AT FIVE CANTERAI FANAMS EACH.

" Rate.	Acres.	Per acre, C. Pag.
" 1	10	10 0 0
" 2	15	9 5 0
" 3		9 0 0
" 4	40	8 5 0
" 5	50	8 0 0
" 6		7 5 0
" 7		7 0 0
" 8		6 5 0
" 9		6 0 0
" 10		5 5 0
" 11		5 0 0
" 12		4 5 0
" 13	4	4 0 0
" 14		3 5 0
" 15		3 0 0
" 16	10	2 5 0
" 17		2 0 0
" 18		1 5 0
" 19		1 0 0
" 20	10	0 5 0

" WET, AT FIVE CANTERAI FANAMS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EACH CLASS.

" Rate.	Acres.	Per acre, C. Pag.
" 1	10	6 0 0
" 2		5 5 0

" Rate.	Acres.	Per acre,	C.	Pag.
" 3.....	.....	5	0	0
" 4.....	.....	4	5	0
" 5.....	40.....	4	0	0
" 6.....	40.....	3	5	0
" 7.....	.....	3	0	0
" 8.....	20.....	2	5	0
" 9.....	15.....	2	0	0
"10.....	20.....	1	5	0
"11.....	10.....	1	0	0
"12.....	3.....	0	5	0

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Whether these tables are intended to exhibit the exact rates of assessment proposed to be laid on the land is doubtful, the instructions in this respect being obscure. They, at all events, mark the principle intended to be adopted in a Ryotwar survey, and are open to the objections made against the similar assessment, and money rates, of the Tumar Jumma.

As in the Tumar Jumma, so in the Ryotwar, much was thus left to the discretion of the assessor in classing and rating lands; much in fact that could not fail, in a country like India, to operate as a bonus to fraud, and oppression. Moreover if a field near a village, and another at a distance requiring more labour to bring the produce to market, were of the same quality, he had to decide the difference of advantage, and to rate the fields accordingly in different classes. In like manner two adjoining fields, one held by a *poor*, an-

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other by a *substantial*, Ryot, were, on this account alone, to be entered in different classes.

With these and other details of minor importance, the survey was begun in June, 1802, by four Gomastahs (clerks or agents) of the collector's Cutchery*—the only persons at that time, in the Ceded Districts, who understood land measuring. By the end of the year, fifty others had contrived to learn the art; and by the end of the following year, one hundred more.

The surveyors were divided into parties of ten each, furnished with a chain thirty-three feet long; and directed to keep their accounts in acres and Goontas; one square chain being equal to one Goonta, and forty Goontas one acre. To each party of ten a head surveyor was appointed.

The head surveyors examined the measurements of the under surveyors; for which purpose they had to re-measure, monthly, one-tenth part of every surveyor's work; and on discovery of inaccuracy, whether from design, haste, or negligence, removal from office im-

* Cutchery— public office where all business respecting the revenue is transacted.

mediately ensued. The vacancies thus occasioned, and by sickness, were very numerous. Yet the places, it appears, were instantly, and easily, filled; although there were only four men in the country, who understood the business, at the commencement of the survey.

Each set of surveyors was followed by two assessors, to value the lands thus measured. On reaching a village, the assessors, with the aid of the Potail and Curnum,* divided the measured lands into classes according to quality. Formerly it appears the lands were divided into first, second and third sorts, corresponding, therefore, with the classification adopted (*vide page* **300**) in the Tumar Jumma; but in this survey there seems to have been a much greater variety. If the Potail and Curnum, on the one hand, and the assessors, on the other, disagreed as to the classification, the Ryots of neighbouring villages were called in to decide to which of the classes the disputed lands should be placed.

Notwithstanding this notable expedient for settling differences, the proceedings of the assessors were found to be in some instances grossly negligent, in others corrupt. They

* Potail — head man of a village. Curnum — village accountant, the same as Putwary in Bengal.

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trusted, it is true, for information to the Potails, Curnums, and Ryots of villages; but, in the result, were, it seems, grossly deceived. To check abuses, therefore, five other honest men, called head assessors, with four deputies to each, were nominated to review the work of the under assessors. The only sources of information, to which these head assessors had access, were still the Potails and Curnums of villages, and the Ryots of adjoining villages, when they could be persuaded to come forward to impeach their neighbours. With this aid, the head assessors made, as a matter of course, various alterations in the classification, and assessment, of the under assessors, by raising some lands to higher classes, and lowering others.

Still entire dependence, it seems, could not be placed on the judgment, and impartiality, of the head assessors. A spice of corruption had crept in to vitiate even their supervision; so that another review became necessary in the collector's own Cutchery. On this occasion all the Potails, Curnums, and principal Ryots, of all the villages of the collectorship were assembled to discuss, and decide, or at all events to aid in the discussion, and decision, on disputed points.

In Europe it may be found rather difficult

to arrange the details of complicated transactions in large assemblies of the people; but in an Eastern collector's Cutchery, and in presence of a vast concourse of persons, all the minutiæ of the classification, and assessment of a country as large as Scotland, and more numerously peopled, would, it was supposed, be easily adjusted!

First, a gross sum, as the total revenue of the district was decided upon.

Next, it was divided in certain portions to each village.

And finally, the rent of every field, occupied by every individual Ryot, was fixed and registered.

If disputes arose, or remissions were demanded, in any one village, the usual recourse was had to the Ryots of a neigbouring village, who were called in to settle this, as well as all other, differences.

Pending this examination in the collector's Cutchery, it was discovered that the Potails and Curnums had still contrived to deceive the assessors by getting their own lands under-rated, and the lands of poorer Ryots over-rated; and after a most laborious investigation of classifications and assessments, and consulting with neighbouring Ryots, all errors were supposed to be so effectually corrected

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that " no fraudulent assessment of any con-
" sequence could possibly be concealed."

No sooner however are we consoled with this assurance than in the very next paragraph we find, that on further examination of the survey at the end of the year, fresh errors had been detected, and remissions granted to the extent of from one half, to one and a half, per cent. on the whole assessment. " The " equivalent (it is added) might easily have " been made up from lands which had been " under-rated ; *for the assessment was as often* " *below, as above, the proper point ;* but it was " thought better in this case to make no al-
" terations," &c.

It is further to be remarked of this last adjustment in the Cutchery, that in spite of all the preceding machinery for classifying, measuring, and re-measuring, assessing and re-assessing, the lands; in spite too of a threefold investigation of the assessor's accounts ; it was found, even at the last, that dependance was not to be placed on their accuracy. For the final adjustment of the revenue, therefore, recourse was had to a comparison of the assessor's accounts with the amount of former collections under native princes, as well as under the Company's government, and to the opinions of intelligent natives ; on

due consideration of all which " such *a sum* " *was at length adopted,* AS IT WAS THOUGHT " *would be the fair assessment of the district* " *in its present state.*"

The amount at length fixed was from five to fifteen per cent. below the estimates of the assessors; because (it is added) " it is the " nature of assessment, proceeding from single " fields to whole districts, to make the aggre- " gate sum greater than what can be easily " realized." Why an assessment on a single field, if accurately made, should necessarily be inaccurate, or excessive, when extended to 10, 100, or 1000, fields, is not very clear to ordinary comprehensions. Such however is the record.*

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* In this report of Sir Thomas Munro's (26th July, 1807) there are certainly some staggering positions. In addition to the preceding, it is stated in another place, " the coarse sugar, " or Jaggery, manufactured in 1216 (1807) was double the " quantity of any preceding year. *The increase of these ar-* " *ticles* (Indigo and sugar) *is occasioned by the addition of* " *an extra land rent amounting to twice or three times the* " *ordinary rate to which all land employed in their culture* " *was subjected,* and this increase is likely to go on progres- " sively as the demand for them is great." If these paragraphs be not misprints, they must be admitted to be curiosities in their way.—5th Rep. Appx. p. 786.

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The survey was last of all confirmed by another pretended inspection of the lands at the time of harvest, to see that the value of the crops corresponded with the valuation of the lands; on which occasion, Pottahs signed by the collector were given to each individual Ryot; in which the quality, extent, and rent, of his land were specifically stated. The principal collector closes his report with an enumeration of the inhabitants, and of the cattle, buffaloes, sheep, and goats, in the province, all taken from the same accurate accounts of surveyors, &c. as before noticed; to which are added the number of acres of every description of land down to the very worst, or Purrampoke, which the collector explains to mean lands utterly unproductive, that is "tracts of rocky and stony ground where no plough can ever go," and therefore highly proper, no doubt, to be inserted in a survey, the main object of which is the ascertainment of productive resources! We are, however, left to conjecture what may have been the precise utility, compared with the labour and expense, of foisting Purrampoke into such a survey; as well as to find out the peculiar excellence of that doctrine which would number the cattle, sheep, and goats of the poorest

of the poor among suitable objects of taxation.*

The survey took five years to accomplish, and cost the Company about 90,000 Pagodas, or, at the then value of the Pagoda, £36,000. When finally settled, the assessment fixed on the property of each Ryot, was considered permanent—that is—until something should occur to change it; or until the time should arrive, in the collector's own judgment, for a "*moderate*" increase.

Remissions of revenue were inadmissible, except in cases of great and notorious calamity. Ordinary deficiencies of crop were not attended to; although these must have occurred, in every year, in some part of the province; and have fallen heavy on those whose portion of an average crop was only a bare subsistence.

In the survey of the Ceded Districts, it was computed that the assessment, or

* It is really no easy matter to treat parts of this subject with becoming composure. No impartial person, I am sure, who has known Sir Thomas Munro, and is, at the same time, acquainted with the habits and propensities of oppressed native Indians, can be otherwise than surprised that so much absurd reasoning, and false conclusions, as are contained in the reports here referred to, should issue from the pen of so able and respectable a man.

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net Jumma, was equal to forty-five per cent. of the gross produce of the lands; leaving therefore an equal share, as may be supposed, for the Ryots; and the remainder for village expences.

The land tax being thus the highest possible leviable amount, increase of revenue could only under this system be anticipated (for increase, commonly called improvement, of revenue is never for a moment lost sight of in India) from additional lands being brought into cultivation; which would then of course be subject to the same assessment. This indeed is carefully provided for in the instructions to the assessors; who are directed not to class fallow, or waste, lands at too low a rate, lest it should encourage graceless Ryots to throw up their highly-taxed cultivated lands, and take to the low taxed wastes, "to "the injury of the revenue."

In this concise review of a Ryotwar survey, and of the duties required to be performed by surveyors and assessors, if there be not enough to convince the reader of the impracticability of so complicated a scheme, let him consult the instructions themselves, with all the further minutiæ they contain; he will there find enough, as well as from what immediately follows, to satisfy him that this celebrated survey, like its predecessor of the

Tumar Jumma, is only fitted, after all the labour and cost of its accomplishment, to rest in peaceful neglect in the books and registers of those who framed it.

When a district or province has *not* been surveyed, and the rent of every field *not* permanently fixed, a different course is pursued. The settlement with the Ryots is then annual, and made in one or other of the following modes:

By settling in the aggregate for whole districts.

By ditto ditto for villages separately.

By the Kulwar settlement,* or settling with each individual separately.

The settlements made by districts, and by villages, seem both to have no better foundation than the vaguest of all estimates. A gross sum, or assessment, is fixed on each district or village, to be afterwards subdivided among the Ryots at the discretion of local officers and Cutchery servants; and this

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* For a full account of the Kulwar settlement, see Col. Munro's Report to the Rev. Board at Madras, of 30th Nov. 1806; and his instructions to sub-collectors, of 30th Sep. 1801.— 5th Rep. Appx. pp. 745 and 750.

sum is taken from the information of Potails and Curnums—that is, of men most interested to deceive by false accounts, including discharged native officers seeking for re-employment.

But the Kulwar, or individual settlement, is of most importance to be considered here, because most highly extolled by its advocates, and because it is the one in which the system is represented as most perfect.

Col. Munro informs us, that though the Kulwar settlement may at first view appear an endless task, it may still be accomplished by persons of ordinary talent and exertion. "*The* "*chief obstacles* (he says) *in the way of it, arise* "*from false accounts, from doubts concerning the* "*rate of assessment, and from the difficulty of* "*ascertaining the condition of the poorer Ryots.* "—*There is perhaps no Curnum* (he might "have added Potail also) *who in any one year* "*ever gives a perfectly true statement of the* "*cultivation of his village; and it is only the* "*fear of removal, or suspicion, that can make* "*him give such accounts as are tolerably accu-* "*rate.*"

To remedy this trifling difficulty, the following very ingenious checks are devised:—

First, the Potail of the village distributes the land to be cultivated to each Ryot; assuring him the rent will be the same as last

year, unless "alteration become unavoidable, "from the total revenue of the village being "somewhat raised, or lowered, (lowered in-"deed!) by the collector."

Secondly, the Potails, and Curnums, of villages, are doubtless, if they chose, the persons most capable, perhaps the only capable persons, to make the settlement correctly; but they cannot, it seems, be trusted, because they have lands of their own; and have, besides, their partialities, and enmities, in the village. This duty is therefore reserved for the collector himself.

In the case of survey, we have seen how the tricks and manœuvres of Potails and Curnums were checked by a trusty band of surveyors and assessors. In this case, a lynx-eyed Tehsildar* goes forth to see that the distribution of lands in his particular district be accurately made.

Again, when the crops are ripening, he makes a second tour of the district, to judge, from the apparent produce, whether the whole cultivation of each village be or be not accounted for. And,

Thirdly, the collector sallies forth with his

* Tehsildar, native collector of a district; a collectorship is generally divided into several districts, each having a separate Tehsildar. Curnum, village accountant. Potail, headman of a village.

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Cutchery, in the season of reaping the crops, to see that all is right, to inquire into representations and complaints, and finally to settle the rents, for the year, of every individual field; for which Pottahs, as before, are given under the collector's signature. All this is represented to be soon done by the help of the Tehsildars' and Curnums' accounts, compared with the reports of Potails and Ryots, the latter being always, it should be remembered, called in when necessary to impeach their neighbours, and to settle difficult questions.

Nothing, perhaps, can more forcibly display the powers of rapid execution possessed by a Ryotwar collector than his ability thus to settle the rents of a country as large as Scotland, including inquiries into representations and complaints, in so short a time as the season of harvest. But this *rapid proceeding* is only on a par with the apparent *facility* of the task, for the reader will observe that it is performed annually, and with as much *accuracy* no doubt in one year as another, notwithstanding the changes that must occur in such an extent of cultivated land. A system thus remarkable for rapidity, facility, and accuracy of execution, may, therefore, be readily admitted to stand unrivalled in the annals of finance.

Where the Ryotwar system has been esta-

blished, rents, it is true, may not vary much from those of the preceding year, except where changes have taken place in the cultivation of particular spots. But in every year, some disputes and representations will occur, and for these there is no other ultimate provision than to refer them for discussion and adjustment to the Ryots of neighbouring villages.

But after all that has been boasted of the advantages and precision of a Kulwar settlement, it would seem that the process of assessing the lands differs but little, if at all, from the former modes. It is still a species of analysis, or resolving of compounds into simple parts; for a gross sum is first laid on a district or village, and afterwards subdivided, till every individual Ryot has his portion separately fixed. It is, at the same time, admitted that the opposite, or synthetical, method would be the most accurate and best, by beginning with the Kulwar, or individual, settlement, and adding these together to form the rent or revenues of villages and districts; but this is also declared to be impracticable, from the interest which every Potail, Curnum, and Ryot of the country have to oppose it, and the consequent difficulty, if not impossibility, of procuring accurate information.

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A reason, however, of still greater weight in the mind of a collector is given for adopting the analytic process, and that is, because it affords greater security for the realization of the public revenue. Colonel Munro's observations on this head are too important to be omitted: he says, "But where no survey "has been made, either the settlement with "all the villages of a district at once, or that "with three or four at a time in succession, "must always be adopted. Besides the reasons "already mentioned, the various accidents "that affect the crop render it convenient to "make the village precede the Kulwar set- "tlement; because, though the general state "of cultivation in a village may be known "early in the season, the particular lands on "which the crop may thrive or fail can never "be ascertained until it is pretty far advanced, and as the assessment of individuals "must, in some manner, be regulated by the "produce, the more advanced the harvest "season is when their rents are fixed, the "more likely are they to be proportioned to "their means of discharging them. *This "system operates, no doubt, in many cases as a "tax upon industry and an encouragement to "idleness; but as there is at present no other "method of securing the realization of the "public revenue, it must be continued* until the

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" country is surveyed, when every man will " be made to pay, not according to the quan- " tity of his crop, but of his land."*

The more, in fact, this famous system is investigated, the plainer does it appear that the whole process of classifying, and measuring, and valuing lands is a mere fallacy. In the cases here adduced, both before and after survey, it is clear that districts and villages were, in the first instance, assessed in the lump; and whether the village or Kulwar settlement be ultimately adopted, seems of very little importance, if neighbouring Ryots are, in both cases, to make good each other's defaults. The plain truth, however, is, that by the analytic method, a heavy tax is more easily imposed on the inhabitants, which they are then obliged to provide for as they can. In other words, it is easier to say to a whole village, " There is a sum of revenue—you *shall* pay " it," than to show just and precise grounds for preferring the demand.†

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* Colonel Munro's Instructions to Collectors of Ceded Districts, 30th September, 1802.—Fifth Report, Appendix, p. 750.

† There is a curious paragraph on this subject in Col. Munro's Letter, 30th Sept. 1802; which is here inserted, that the

In this way the amount "levied on each "Ryot was in fact left to be determined at

reader may see the effect produced universally on the minds of the natives (for this may be taken for a general not partial picture) by the most applauded of our revenue systems; and at the same time judge for himself how far it is probable, a system so universally obnoxious, and opposed, can have any just claim, either to accuracy of construction, or to moderation of assessment. Let him also compare this note with Mr. Shore's account (*p.* 339) of the mode of proceeding in concluding a revenue settlement in Bengal.

"The third kind of settlement, the Kulwar, or individual "settlement, if the Curnum's accounts could be depended "upon, would naturally be the best; because the stock of "cattle, and the quantity and quality of land belonging to each "cultivator, being known, it would be easy to fix his rent; and "that of all the cultivators added together would form the "land rent of the village. But as the *Curnum's accounts are* "*always false*, to begin with fixing the rents of the cultiva-"tors would not only be the most tedious, but the most un-"equal of all settlements. Every single cultivator objects to "his own assessment. When the Cutchery servants, by "stating the quantity of his land, and the rent that had been "drawn from it in preceding years, endeavour to convince him "that the assessment is moderate, and that he ought to agree "to it, he urges all the excuses commonly brought forward "by that class of men; the grain is now very cheap; that "some of his cattle are dead; that he is poor, and cannot cul-"tivate his land without an abatement of rent. *He is pri-*"*vately encouraged by the Potail, and principal farmers*,

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 589.

" the discretion of the European or native " revenue officers, for it was the practice to

" *to give as much opposition as possible, because they all in* " *their turns intend to do the same;* and the hope that he can " obtain a reduction of his rent, they may also under the same " pretences expect the same indulgence. Every Ryot is " usually sufficiently careful of his own interest to dispute " about his rent, whether it is high or low; but even if there " should be some among them who, being satisfied with it, " have no thoughts of starting objections, the fear of the Po- " tail's displeasure, and of the reproaches of the other Ryots, " for deserting the common cause, induces them to raise as " many difficulties as any of the rest. Much time is thus con- " sumed in debating upon the rent of every individual; and " if the revenue servants, either believing their representations " of distress, or wishing to expedite the settlement, allow some " abatement of rent to those who are reckoned the poorest, " they find that the aggregate of these remissions, not only " causes a considerable loss of rent, but increases the difficulty " of settling other villages, by encouraging the Ryots to insist " on a similar, or perhaps a greater, reduction. The Ryots " who dispute the most obstinately, even though their rents " are already too low, are the most likely to get a farther " abatement; and those who are less noisy, and litigious, are " most liable to have their rents, already too high, raised still " higher. It may be thought that the Ryots being collected to- " gether in one place, no one would allow the land of another " to be more favourably rated than his own without complain- " ing. This usually takes place in villages where none of the " Ryots are very poor; where they are few in number; and

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" *compel* the Ryot to occupy as much land, " and consequently to pay as much revenue " as they deemed proportionate to his circum- " stances; he was not allowed on payment " even of the high survey assessment fixed on " each field, to cultivate only those fields to " which he gave the preference; his task was " assigned to him; he was constrained to oc- " cupy all such fields as were allotted to him " by the revenue officers; and whether he " cultivated them, or not, he was, as Mr.

" nearly on a footing with regard to property. In such cases " they generally insist upon a fair division of the assessment; " but in most other villages, in which both the poorest and " the most substantial Ryots are found, *the assessment is for* " *the most part unequal, and is always most favourable to* " *the relations of the Potail,* and to such other Ryots as hold " out the most stubbornly."— Appx. 5th Rep. p. 751.

Fifteen years after this period, or in 1817-18, it is still unequivocally admitted by the Revenue Board at Madras, that most of the Ryotwar surveys and settlements were altogether arbitrary and unsatisfactory—" hastily performed and badly executed"—that *they existed only in the accounts of the collector's Cutchery,* and never adopted or followed by the people, and that whilst they professed to fix an equal and moderate tax on each field, they were found, in almost every instance, to increase greatly, and in some instances, enormously, the government demand on the country.—Vide Sel. from Ind. Rec. Vol. I. pp. 872 and 940.

" Thackery emphatically terms it, *saddled* with " the rent of each."*

It may be added that if the Ryot was driven by these oppressions to fly, and seek a subsistence elsewhere, he was followed wherever he went, and assessed at discretion, or deprived of the advantages he might expect to derive from change of residence.

These are facts which I am aware could hardly be credited on the bare assertion of a disinterested unofficial individual; but as it is of importance that the real merits of this highly vaunted system should be fully illustrated, I shall here subjoin Col. Munro's own testimony to the same points. In his Report of the 25th August, 1805, (the Revenue Board tells us that) " Col. Munro estimates the pro- " portion of extra land which the Ryots were " obliged to occupy, but could not cultivate " properly for want of stock, to be not less " than ten or twelve per cent. of the whole of " the land in cultivation; and he states that " if every restraint on their inclination were " removed, they would probably throw up one " fourth of the land in cultivation." In an

* Minute of Mad. Rev. Board. Vide Selections from Ind. Rec. Vol. I. p. 942.

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other part of the said report, he observes, " the same causes which make land unsale- " able, and several others, concur to render it " impracticable to establish a lease for a term " of years, and far less a permanent settle- " ment with the Ryots individually. Many " of them are so poor that it is always doubt- " ful whether they will next year be in the " rank of cultivators or labourers; and few " of them are so rich as not to be liable to " be forced, by one or two bad seasons, to " throw up a considerable part of their farms. " The loss of a bullock, or of a member of the " family who worked in the field, or confine- " ment by a fit of sickness, frequently dis- " abled them from paying their usual rent the " ensuing year."

After twelve years experience of this system in various districts, it is also testified by the Revenue Board, that although Ryotwar settlements professed to be an assessment on the land, according to a fixed rule, yet the Jummabundy or revenue-roll of a district, was never settled until late in each season, when the produce of the harvest, and the means of the Ryot, could be estimated with some degree of accuracy. This, in fact, was nothing more than a recurrence to the old mode of

collection; whence estimators were employed in harvest season to value the crop; to prohibit its being cut without authority; to keep watchmen over it, after reaping, lest the Ryots should make away with part of the grain; and likewise to store it, under sequestration till sold, lest government should lose the only security it had for the realization of the revenue; from all which the Revenue Board are led to declare it as their belief, and the result of their experience, "that the sys-"tem, such as it is, never was established "generally upon uniform principles."

We are told, it is true, that some of these evils were remedied by the introduction of the judicial system into the Madras provinces in 1806, and that after Ryots had become habituated to the practical operation of the Zillah courts, they could protect themselves against being forced to cultivate unproductive lands, as well as against the process of seizure, when driven by oppression or misfortune to emigrate into other districts; but this protection could only be of limited avail; for, as the Court of Directors justly observe on this head, "It is in vain "to say that the Ryots are protected against "harassing and vexatious proceedings by "the courts of justice; for the loss of time,

" the expence incident to a legal process, and " the delay of decision will, in nine instances " out of ten, prevent the Ryot from appealing " to the Court. If the Courts were really " effectual for the protection of the Ryots, the " oppressions stated by Mr. Ravenshaw and " Mr. Garrow, to have been practised on them " could not have taken place upon the scale " described in their letters."* But to return to Col. Munro's arrangements in the Ceded Districts.

Remissions were ordered to be adjusted on the following principles. In cases of great failure, remissions must be allowed; there is no alternative; but in seasons of uncommon abundance, an increase of revenue is taken to balance the failure. In ordinary seasons, when crops are partially bad (and this must always be the case in some part or other of an extensive district), the loss, by remissions to poor Ryots, is assessed upon the lands of the more fortunate or the more industrious Ryots, to the extent of ten to twelve per cent. additional. The full rent of waste land is not exacted until, according to quality, it has

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 638.

been cultivated from two to seven years; but where a country has recently suffered from invasion, internal disturbance, or other great calamity, as, for example, in consequence of a Wulsa,* "rents" must necessarily be below their former level for a time. A Ryot, stripped of every rag and every implement, must have some allowance made to retrieve past robberies and losses. In these cases, however, the revenue is never lost sight of; for it is gradually raised in these districts from year to year, as well on the cultivated as waste lands, following, it is observed, the improving condition of the Ryots until they shall have attained *the standard assessment*,† that bright star

* For the description of a Wulsa, *vide Part II. p.* 258.

† "I have described the *Kulwar* settlement as it is "made in a country in its ordinary state of cultivation; but "in one which has suffered from invasion or internal disturb- "ances, and in which a part of the land formerly cultivated is "waste, and the remainder held at a rent considerably below "the ancient standard, the process is more tedious and diffi- "cult; because it is requisite not only to increase, or diminish, "the rents of such individuals as occupy, or throw up, land, "but to raise the rent of every Ryot, by raising the rent of all "land gradually to its former level, following cautiously the "improving condition of the Ryots. This was done through- "out the Ceded Districts for some years, but they have all now, "with a very few exceptions, reached the standard assess- "ment."—Vide Colonel Munro's Report, 30th Nov. 1806. Fifth Report, Appendix, p. 747.

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of promise and expectation, on which the eye of every collector in India is always firmly fixed.

Of remissions generally, it may be here added, that it is laid down in the instructions to collectors not to encourage the Ryots to expect them; that if claims on this head were once admitted, there would be no end to investigation; *that if the crop produced be even less than the seed sown, the full rent should still be demanded;* and if the Ryot be unable to pay, the deficiency is required to be assessed on the village, or, if the village cannot pay, on a neighbouring village,* limiting always the

* The Revenue Board at Madras, in a very able minute of the 5th January, 1818 (Vide Selection of Papers from India Records, vol. i. p. 941) remark on this subject: "The Ryotwar settlement in fact was made annually frequently by the Tehsildars or Serishtadars, and was not in general concluded until after the crop had been raised. The system then was to *make as high a settlement as it was practicable to realize;* if the crop was good, the demand was raised as high within the survey rate as the means of the Ryot would admit; if the crop was bad, the last farthing was notwithstanding demanded, and no remission was allowed, unless the Ryot was totally unable to pay the rent. On this point the most severe scrutiny was instituted; for not only was the whole of the collector's detailed establishment of servants employed in an investigation of his means, *but his neighbours were converted into inquisitors, by being themselves made liable for his failure,* unless they could show that he was possessed of property."

re-assessment as before-mentioned to ten or twelve per cent., lest it should *injure the next year's revenue.*

Neither these rules, however, nor the reasons given for them, afford any ground for concurring in the accuracy, or the moderation, of the assessment which so much complicated labour had been employed to form; for it is expressly admitted by Colonel Munro, that no positive rule exists, whereby a Ryot's claim to remissions can be accurately judged of; that it is easy for Ryots, even in favourable years, to show a real loss, "because in every village, "in every season, *there are a few fields whose* "*produce is not equal to their rent;* and these "fields only would be mentioned as the cause "of failure and distress, while those whose "crops had been more abundant, having been "already reaped, there would be no means of "determining how far the deficiency of pro-"duce, in the one case, was counterbalanced "by the excess of the other."*

It is also clear from the whole tenor of Col. Munro's Report, and on one occasion, as we have already seen, (p. **474**) distinctly avowed, that though this system operates as a tax

* Colonel Munro's Instructions to Collectors of Ceded Districts, 25th August, 1802. Fifth Report, Appendix, p. 749.

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upon industry, and an encouragement to idleness, still, with Ryots to whom nothing was left, in years of ordinary produce, but a bare subsistence, there was *no other method of securing the realization of the public revenues.**

Very shortly after Col. Munro's Report of the 26th July, 1807, above referred to, or in

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* These are admissions by the great advocate, and patron, of the Ryotwar system. The following remarks on this part of the subject, by the Revenue Board at Madras, are so very just and clear, that I cannot refrain from submitting them to the consideration of the reader. "This last mentioned rule of the "Ryotwar system, which, to make good the failure of unsuc- "cessful Ryots, imposed an extra assessment not exceeding "ten per cent. upon their more fortunate neighbours in the "same village, and even occasionally upon those in the vil- "lages of the vicinity, was found to be indispensable to the "security of the revenue under that system. The little profit "accruing to the industrious Ryot, was thus taken by the "state, to remunerate it for the losses it sustained from the "failure of the less fortunate, or more extravagant: and while "the Ryotwar system dissolved the unity of interest, and the "joint partnership in profit and loss, which formerly existed "among each village community in all the provinces east of "the Ghauts, and was so beneficial both to the members of "its own municipal body, and to the government, it in fact "admitted that their joint responsibility was necessary for the "security of the public revenue; and precluding the Ryots "from an equal participation of the profit, most unjustly ob- "liged them to share jointly the loss."—Selections from Ind. Rec. Vol. I. p. 942.

the month of August following,* he submitted a plan for *permanently settling* the Ceded Districts on the Ryotwar principle, together with his opinion on the advantages of that mode of settlement, compared with the Zemindary tenure. This plan sets off, like the other, on the presumption of the sovereign being sole proprietor of the soil, and declaring, in fact, in express terms, that "nothing can be "plainer than that private landed property "has never existed in India excepting on the "Malabar coast." The plan may boast, however, one advantage over other systems, in a proposed remission in favour of the Ryots of twenty-five per cent. on the survey rate of assessment. Col. Munro's calculation is as follows:—

Of the total gross produce, say . . .	100
Government's share by the present assessment	45
Deduct twenty-five per cent. of assessment	11¼
Government's share by proposed permanent assessment	33¾

The share of government would thus be reduced to one-third of the gross produce. The

* 15th Aug. 1807. Vide 5th Rep. Appx. p. 942.

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rate to be permanently fixed on the lands in cultivation; and the occupant Ryot constituted absolute proprietor, so long as he pays this rate. No remissions on account of bad crops, or other accidents, were to be allowed; but deficiencies or failures of individuals to be made good by an additional assessment on the village, not exceeding ten per cent., if they could not be liquidated from the property of the defaulters themselves. *Security of revenue* being always a primary consideration, it was also provided that no private creditor should be allowed to distrain the property of a Ryot, until he gave security for the discharge of any demands the public might have against it. All waste lands were to be retained as the property of government. Col. Munro estimated the wastes, capable of cultivation, at above three millions of acres; and, from the adoption of this plan, anticipated the immediate occupation of these wastes; whence population, he thought, would increase even faster than in America, and the revenues be augmented about three lacs of Pagodas in ten years—with a much larger addition in twenty-five years—an addition which gave to this plan a further advantage over the permanent Zemindary settlement, where the revenue was fixed never to rise.

These were dazzling anticipations; and though the plan could not be adopted, the genius of its projector was thought deserving of the highest praise. When the plan was taken into consideration by the Revenue Board at Madras, they recorded their opinion of it as "a measure highly advisable and cal "culated to produce great ulterior advan- "tages." They were obliged, however, to reject it, because "the exigences of government "would not allow of so great a sacrifice as a "remission on the present standard rents to "the extent of twenty-five, or even of fifteen "per cent."*

It only remains, therefore, to ascertain the operation as far as we can, of the system which Col. Munro did introduce into the Ceded Districts.

In the Appendix to the Fifth Report, (No. XXI. page 797,) a statement is given of actual collections from the Ceded Districts for eight years, or from 1800-1 to 1807-8 inclusive, and therefore comprising the seven years of Col. Munro's management.

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* 5th Rep. Appx. p. 900.—and Mad. Rev. Scl. Vol. I. p. 485-6.

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	Star Pagodas.
These districts were ceded to the Company at an annual valuation of	1,651,465
In 1800-1, the total collections from Bellary and Cuddapah, (the two great divisions of this province) amounted, including licenses and customs, to . . .	1,078,096
This amount was gradually augmented under Col. Munro's management, until in 1807-8, including the Kurnoul tribute, it reached the point of	1,635,066*
It had however exceeded this sum in two intermediate years.	
The year 1806-7, was one of drought and famine, yet the revenue collected from the district was	1,530,182
The highest collections made by Col. Munro, were in 1804-5, when the total revenue, including the Kurnoul tribute, amounted to	1,787,081

* In another document the amount is stated at 1,658,253 Pagodas. We have no means of reconciling the difference, which, however, is not material.

	Star Pagodas.
But the total collections from Bellary, Cuddapah and Kurnoul, for the eight years, are stated to be 11,954,170 Pagodas, averaging therefore for the whole period	1,494,271
Col. Munro, however, predicted on leaving the collectorship, that " if no alteration was attempted, " the Ceded Districts would " yield one year with another, " without the necessity of a sin- " gle Sepoy to aid in the col- " lections," about *	1,800,000

Or more by upwards of 300,000 Pagodas per annum, than the average of his own collections.

In the year 1808-9, or that succeeding the eight years abovementioned, a change took place by substituting the village settlement (which will be described directly) for the Ryotwary; and though the change was at first partial, or rather confined to the Cuddapah division of the pro-

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 505.

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Star Pagodas.

vince, the revenue realized (including the Kurnoul tribute) is stated to have been 1,802,994*

In the following year, or 1809-10, the revenue (or rather the *Jumma* of the year) fell off to . . 1,705,751*

The Court of Directors ascribe this defalcation to a change which took place at this time, whereby the Ryotwary was superseded by a village settlement; and to the collections having been overstrained in the preceding year, whence thousands of Ryots, it appears, deserted the district, and others were reduced to great poverty.

The Village settlement called triennial comprised the years 1808-9, 1809-10, and 1810-11. This was succeeded by the decennial village settlement, commencing with 1811-12.†

We have no printed account of the revenues realized from the whole district under either

* Mad. Rev. Selec. vol. i. p. 494—543. 666. I suspect both these sums can only mean the *Jumma* of the year, not the amount realized; the latter certainly does; as the figures in the following page evince. Of the 1,802,994 Pagodas mentioned in the text as the revenue of 1808-9, it may be added that it was an abrupt increase on the Jumma of the preceding year in no less a sum than 144,741 Pagodas.

† These two settlements will be described in the following section.

lease; but there is given a report from the collector of Cuddapah detailing his proceedings in that division of the province up to the period of forming the decennial settlement. The collector states the revenues realized from the Cuddapah division during the triennial lease as follows:—

	Star Pagodas.		Star Pagodas.
In 1808-9			
Jumma or land revenue	749,222.	Actual collections	738,282
In 1809-10			
Ditto	717,761.	Ditto	685,791
In 1810-11			
Ditto	729,949.	Ditto	653,104
			3)2077,177
		Average of triennial collections	692,392
Whilst the Jumma fixed for the decennial settlement which immediately followed the triennial, was			689,368

Up to the year 1808-9 inclusive, the Bellary division, including Kurnoul, seems to have been kept under Ryotwar management, and though suffering from two successive years of drought, the Jumma had gone on increasing until in the aforesaid year, including licences and customs, it reached the sum of 974,621 S. Pagodas, which, added to 828,733 for Cuddapah, makes up the 1,802,994 above-mentioned. In like manner, the Jumma of

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Bellary, including licences and customs, for 1809-10, is stated to have been fixed at 904,935 Star Pagodas, and that of Cuddapah at 800,816 Pagodas, making therefore the 1,795,751 Pagodas above stated. The triennial village settlement could not be introduced, it seems, into Bellary till 1809-10, at which time the difficulties which had opposed it in the preceding year still continued to exist. These are stated to be, "*the high* "*amount of the assessment in the preceding* "*year;* the fall in the price of grain at the "close of that year; the mortality occasioned "by a pestilential fever; and the *unusual* "*emigration of the cultivators to the Mysore* "*country.*"*

With these difficulties to struggle against, it is probable the difference in the Bellary division between the Jumma and actual collections would be at least as great as that which is ascertained to have occurred in the Cuddapah division. Adopting, therefore, this proportion, we shall only have for the actual realization in both divisions for 1809-10 about 1,630,000, or nearly two and a half lacs of Pagodas, less than Colonel Munro's estimate of their capacity. It was, however, stipu-

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 523.

lated, that this Jumma for Bellary, notwithstanding the calamities from which the country suffered, should be increased by Pag. 77,816 in 1810-11, with a farther increase in 1811-12 of Pag. 36,945. How much of this Jumma was actually realized, I cannot tell; but it is not likely to have been realized with any lesser deficiencies than above described.*

The preceding observations chiefly bear on the land revenue, or, as it is commonly called, "land rent" of the Ceded Districts (for rent

* These conclusions will probably be thought to be confirmed by the reasons which the Revenue Board gave for the necessity of abandoning the Ryotwar system in the Ceded Districts, and substituting the Mouzawar or village settlement. "The land "revenue (of the Ceded Districts) so far (they say) from being "below, *considerably exceeded the just proportion which it* "*ought to bear to the actual resources.* These sentiments "have been often repeated in substance, as well by the collect- "ors as by the Board. It has been further stated, that "*the revenue so raised has, for some years, pressed hard on* "*the country*, that no increase was expected, but that a dimi- "nution was rather to be apprehended, and it was considered "under these circumstances that to fix the ultimate demand "upon the lands was the measure by which not only the gene- "ral interests, but the immediate pecuniary interests of the "government would be best consulted." — Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 584.

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and revenue are frequently confounded in Indian records), and although this tax professes to be forty-five or fifty per cent. of the gross produce of land, still it is not sufficient to satisfy the cravings of Eastern finance. The Jumma of an Indian collectorship includes therefore sundry taxes, commonly called in other districts Moterpha, but in the Ceded Districts Veesabuddy. These are personal or professional taxes laid on merchants, traders, manufacturers, craftsmen, houses, shops, looms, tools, instruments of labour and art, and even the implements of agriculture. These taxes are common to every province; but as the Revenue Board at Madras assures us that greater attention has been paid to the proper distribution of the tax in the Ceded Districts than elsewhere, a description of it in this place will equally serve for other parts.

The tax then may be stated to partake of the nature of an income tax. It has no reference whatever to the value of the article on which it is nominally imposed, but to the supposed gains or profits of the payer. When laid, for example, on a labourer's house, it is computed on the produce of a certain number of days' labour; and when fixed at one or two Rupees per annum, it is fixed on a miserable hut hardly worth two years' purchase of the tax. In like

manner with weavers, artificers, shopkeepers, merchants, &c. the taxes on their implements, shops, or houses, are always regulated by estimate of their profits, and very often exceed the full value of the articles they use, or the shops and houses they occupy.

The mode adopted for arriving at the profits of merchants deserves to be remarked. It is admitted that it would be vexatious to attempt to discover the income of each individual; but the aggregate income of all the merchants of a district is collected from accounts of the imports and exports, the population, the produce and consumption, and the usual profits of trade; and fifteen per cent. upon the same, resulting from this ingenious calculation, is imposed on the merchants *en masse*, leaving them to distribute it in detail according to their own knowledge of individual gains. It appears that this tax was at first unequally distributed in the Ceded Districts owing to certain merchants being exempted, in consequence of other contributions required at their hands by the former native government. In Roydroog (a subdivision of the province) the tax had been regulated on merchants and shopkeepers, so as to yield, it was supposed, fifteen per cent. on their respective incomes. The rest of the province being unequally, or rather inadequately, taxed,

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and admitting in the collector's judgment of a "moderate increase," the principal merchants from other parts were assembled at the Cutchery, and informed that their rates must be raised, so as to be placed on a footing with their brethren of Roydroog. After some days' debate, and finding probably resistance vain, the matter was arranged—and the following is given to us as the result:—

	Star Pagodas.
"House-rent of the lower classes of "people, tradesmen, &c. . . .	63,946
"Do. of merchants and shopkeepers	33,124
"Do. to be laid on in 1807-8 to 1810- "11 to raise the other districts to "the level of Roydroog	21,000
Total . .	118,070*

This sum, it is true, is included in the Jumma of the year; but still a large portion of it is contributed by the same persons who have also to pay fifty per cent.† of the gross produce of

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 552.

† "It is distinctly admitted by the local authorities, (by "Col. Munro, as well as by his successors,) that more than "one half of the gross produce of the land is paid by the "Ryots in the Ceded Districts. There are sufficient grounds "for believing that the case is not materially different else-

their land; for weavers, and other artificers, &c. are very generally cultivators also in India, and are thus taxed in both capacities.

In the selection from India Records, there is a report of 22nd Dec. 1812, from the collector of Cuddapah,* in which a minute detail is given of the taxes collected under this head—a detail that offends, to excess, against every principle by which a just system of taxation ought to be regulated. Irregularity, inequality, uncertainty, liability to fraud error and evasion, the most vexatious interference in private concerns, and the power of arbitrary exaction, are its prominent characteristics. Yet the collector informs us that the "principle of this tax is excellent," and for no other reason that can be discovered, than because it was established by his predecessor, and yielded a sum of revenue to government, which it might not be quite convenient to dispense with. According to this report the

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" where. In none of the provinces does it appear that the " land revenue is in a progressive state of improvement. On " the contrary, the Board of Revenue expressly declare, that " it has for some years pressed hard upon the country, and that " it is collected with encreasing difficulty." Letter from Madras Gov. to Court of Directors, 29th Feb. 1812. Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 516.

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 687 to 694.

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taxes in question were classed under three heads:—

The Veesabuddy, or tax on merchants, traders, and shopkeepers.

Mohturfa or tax on weavers, cotton cleaners, shepherds, goldsmiths, braziers, iron-smiths, carpenters, stone-cutters, &c. and

Bazeebab, consisting of a number of small taxes annually rented out to the highest bidder. The renter was thus constituted a petty chieftain, with power to exact fees at marriages, religious ceremonies, *to inquire into, and fine, the misconduct of females in families,* and other misdemeanours; and in the exercise of these privileges would often urge the plea of engagements to the Cirkar (government) to justify extortion.

The details of these taxes are too long to be given in this place. The reader, however, may judge of the operation and character of all, by the following selection of one as described in the collector's report. "The mode of set-
"tling the Mohturfa on looms hitherto has
"been very minute; every circumstance of
"the weaver's family is considered, the num-
"ber of days which he devotes to his loom, the
"number of his children, the assistance which
"he receives from them, and the number and

" quality of the pieces which he can turn out " in a month or year, so that let him exert him- " self as he will, his industry will always be " taxed to the highest possible degree. This " mode always leads to such details, that the " Cirkar (government) servants cannot enter " into it, and the assessment of the tax is in " consequence left a great deal too much to " the Curnums of the villages. No weaver " can possibly know what he is to pay to the " Cirkar, till the demand comes to be made for " his having exerted himself in the course of " the year; and having turned out one or two " pieces of cloth more than he did the year " before, though his family and looms have " remained the same, is made a ground for " his being charged with a higher Mohturfa; " and at last, instead of a professional, it be- " comes a real income tax." *

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* On one occasion, it appears, that the Board of Trade at Madras recommended that *the Weavers employed on the Company's investment* should be exempted from the Mohturfa tax. The Revenue Board with somewhat more liberality, proposed that the exemption should extend to all weavers generally, which the Court of Directors also approved; adding a remark, which, considering the constitution of the East India Company, will appear to some not a little extraordinary. Their words are, " The proposition from the Board of Trade, that " the tax should be placed on a different footing as to the

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Tiresome as these statements may be, they are the only means from which to deduce an accurate judgment of the practical operation of the Ryotwar system. It will probably, then, be admitted from the preceding facts that exorbitant assessment is its true character—an assessment founded on the most erroneous principles of taxation, and effectually destructive of that elasticity which enables less burthened societies to resist, or to recover from, casual calamities. Col. Munro himself admits that this assessment "or survey rent," as he terms it, "is considerably higher than it ought "to be, and higher than it ever had been, or "than could be realized as long as there are "bad crops and poor Ryots."* To protect it, therefore, against failure or defalcation, involved the necessity† of "continual interfer- "ence with the cultivators, and a constant ex- "ercise of domiciliary controul," which very few collectors are equal to and none likely to

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"Company's weavers, from that on which it is to affect others, "furnishes an *apt illustration of the justice of the remarks* "*which we have more than once made upon the impropriety* "*of committing to a Board of Trade the superintendance of* "*any part of the revenue of Government.*"—Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. III. p. 599.

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 505.

† Ibid. p. 483.

perform without infinite vexation, and monstrous injustice. Such, accordingly, was its pressure on the Ryots, between whom and the governing power no intermediate bond of union could subsist, that when the village settlement was attempted to be introduced, Potails were compelled, in some instances, to reject the high terms proposed; and were, in others, utterly unable to fulfil them. Foreign lessees were accordingly substituted to add, by their exactions, to other oppressions. Emigrations ensued; short crops, calamitous seasons, and epidemic diseases. With all this, an attempt was made to realize the prediction of Col. Munro by raising the revenue of the province to a standard which it never had attained, and fixing the annual Jumma at 1,800,000 Pagodas. A great, and perhaps permanent, decline has been the consequence. Whether the country has yet recovered the shock; or whether the anticipation of Col. Munro, on quitting the collectorship, be any thing better than a vain boast, may be more than doubted.

SECTION XIV.

MOUZAWAR, OR VILLAGE, SETTLEMENT.

Mouzawar, or village, settlement.

In 1808, the Madras government got out of humour with the Ryotwar system, and determined to supplant it by the adoption of village rents, or leasing out the villages, in all the districts not yet blessed with the Zemindary tenure, to the Potails or principal cultivators; or, in the event of their declining, to foreign lessees for periods of three years. The chief distinction between this and the Ryotwar settlement consisted in its being made with the village community collectively, or their representative, not with each individual Ryot; and in a sum being fixed, as public revenue, on the village at large, instead of upon each field; and, in consideration of the payment thereof, making over the entire lands of the village, both arable and waste, to the management of the village community. The object of this change was comparative economy, and less trouble and inconvenience in the collections, together with a nearer approximation to the principles of a permanent settlement, for which it was, in fact, intended to prepare the way. A settlement by villages was also thought to be more conformable to ancient Hindoo usage, whilst the new code of judicature,

which, in 1806, had been extended to the Ryotwar districts, had been attended with much practical inconvenience, and was declared, both by government and the revenue board, to be incompatible with the minute details of Ryotwar settlements; it being imperative, in all cases of dispute or arrears of revenue, to go through the same process in the courts for the smallest amount as for large sums.

The Ryotwar system, too, being always directed to the one object of exacting from the country the largest amount of revenue it could afford to pay, both the Revenue Board and the Government of Madras had experienced, and repeatedly recorded their conviction, that the resources of the country were on the decline; that the collections, under this system of rack-rent, were realized, from year to year, with increasing difficulty; and that there were no means of arresting the progress of decay, consistently with the still more pressing necessity of deriving at the same time an undiminished revenue from the country, but by fixing the assessment at once upon the cultivated lands, leaving the proprietors to seek for gain in the future cultivation of attached wastes. The village settlement was, therefore, introduced with this view; permanency was its ulterior

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object; the Madras government declaring their perfect conviction, "after all the reflection we "are capable of bestowing on the subject, and "all the experience we have gained concern- "ing it, that a permanent settlement of the "land revenue is, more than any other cir- "cumstance, essential to the cherishing of the "resources of the country, and that it is a "work which ought to be undertaken without "further delay."*

A settlement with the Potails and Meerassadars (hereditary proprietors) of villages had certainly the recommendation of being made, or proposed to be made, with the only persons who could know any thing of the real value of the lands; and also with the natural heads of each community. But here, as in all similar cases, revenue—revenue was the great desideratum. Strange as it may appear, the lessees or renters were required to stipulate for *larger* sums of revenue than had been realized, even under the Ryotwar settlements; and, very generally, for a progressive increase of revenue during each year of the lease.† In

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 655.

† The reader will recollect that under the Ryotwar system the revenue exacted from each Ryot was always the largest amount that could be levied without impairing the resources of

Mouzawar, or village, settlement.

considerable tracts of country, therefore, no renters could be found, and the Ryotwar system was necessarily continued. The Potails and Meerassadars, in many instances, declined engagements on the terms proposed. In others, Potails took the leases, merely to prevent the intrusion of strangers into their villages; whilst village renters, who did take leases, were, generally speaking, so poor as to be unable to fulfil their engagements in any one year, without pressing severely on the Ryots. One bad season was sufficient to ruin the renters, and proportionably to affect the prosperity of the country. Complaints abounded of oppressive acts and unjust demands on the one hand, and evasive delays on the other, and so numerous, that if the Courts of Justice had nothing else to do, they could not have redressed them.

All these evils are represented by the committee of the House of Commons, in their Fifth Report, to have been particularly exemplified in the two collectorships of Arcot; in the southern division of which it would seem that the Ryotwar settlement had not, from some accident, been introduced until the appointment

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the country. Here, however, a larger sum than the largest is demanded, and a progressive annual increase even of that amount throughout the short period of a three years' lease!!!

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of Mr. Ravenshaw to be its collector. It had, therefore, continued to be administered under village farms or rents till the year 1805-6, at which time the state of the country is thus represented by the Board of Revenue in their Report of the 11th September, 1806.

"The examples of the pernicious policy of "the late sovereign of the Carnatic were, as "it were, embodied in the deplorable picture "of the state of the province in question. "The Grammatan (or Potail) had thought "himself warranted in his oppression, by "following the footsteps of his prince. The "poor peasant endeavoured to elude by fraud "what he could not resist by force; the public "servants were allowed, by a participation in "the spoil, to confederate against their em-"ployers; whilst the country, suffering under "such a complication of evils, was accelerated "in its progress to decay." *

This, be it remarked, is a description of a large tract of the Company's possessions up to the year 1806; and may indeed be safely taken for a far more extensive picture. Although applied to a former administration, it is but justice to the Madras Revenue Board to observe that on various other occasions, when

* Fifth Report, p. 155.

descanting on our own acts and errors, they have boldly denounced their effects on the country, in as strong and stronger colours. In the present instance, indeed, the reader will perhaps think it hardly just to the ashes of the old Nabob to have the whole of this "deplorable picture" charged on his "pernici- "ous policy," when it is recollected that, at this time, the province in question had been for five years (vide page **431**) under our own exclusive management.

Mr. Ravenshaw introduced the Ryotwar settlement into the Southern division of Arcot, in 1805-6; and in the two following years great improvement was observed in the state of this country;* accompanied of course by the usual proof of Indian improvement, increase of revenue. This increase, however, appears to have been the result of extended cultivation; for Mr. Ravenshaw is well known for his opinions in favour of moderate assessment; and, like Sir Thomas Munro, he was always distinguished for his vigilance as a collector, and sincere desire to promote, as far as the system itself admitted, the welfare of the native inhabitants.

The new village system was nevertheless introduced into Arcot in 1808-9, although stre-

* 5th Report, p. 155.

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nuously objected to by the collector. The land revenue of the rented villages is stated as follows: —

	Star Pagodas.
In 1808-9	536,846
In 1809-10	542,886
In 1810-11	542,945

This is exclusive of farms and licences, &c. and is stated to be a very considerable increase on former years' collections.*

In the northern division of Arcot, the village settlement was introduced with a still greater increase of revenue throughout the period of the lease.

In Dindigul it is stated that the village settlement for the whole period of the lease on thirty-five estates was fixed as follows: —

	Star Pagodas.
For 1807-8	81,163
For 1808-9	95,866
For 1809-10	99,349
Total for three years . . .	276,378
The total amount of the permanent settlement on the same lands for the same period would have been	272,957
Excess of village lease . .	3421

* Selection of Papers from Ind. Rec. Vol. I. p. 506.

But a concise view of the progress of revenue settlements in Dindigul will best exhibit the true character of our financial arrangements, as well in these districts as in other parts: —

	Star Pagodas.
In 1796-7 the sum total of revenue collected from Dindigul was . . .	70,797
In 1803-4 it had mounted up to . .	130,041
The valuation of the province by survey being	131,315
This latter sum was taken as the basis of the permanent settlement in 1804-5, with a deduction of 16½ per cent. for the Mootahdar's share, whence the net permanent Jumma was fixed at	109,189

But the permanent settlement in Dindigul having wholly failed, and the estates being resumed by government, the triennial village settlement was introduced, as above-mentioned, in the years 1807-8. The sums above specified are, however, nothing more than the "land rent" of the said estates, for, in a subsequent part of the same report,* we find

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 480.

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the aggregate revenues of Dindigul stated as follows: —

	Star Pagodas.
Total "land rent" of the thirty-five estates above-mentioned, including Peishcush of the Pollams (53,565)	134,728
Add, hill rent, farms and licences, and frontier duty	9577
Total of Dindigul . . .	144,305

In like manner the total collections of land revenue from Madura, which in 1801-2 were only 90,921 S. Pags., had mounted in 1806-7 to

Pags.	122,003	
and in 1807-8, to	135,459	
Peishcush of the Polygars .	7969	
Farms and licences . . .	1302	
		144,730
Add for Manapara		27,969
Total Jumma of the Collectorship for 1807-8		317,004

This then appears to be the result of the first year of the lease. In the second year, or 1808-9,* we have for the total revenues as above —

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 501.

For Dindigul . .	S. Pags.	162,729
Madura		145,897
Manapara		28,753
Total for 1808-9		337,379

We have no account of the third year of this settlement; but no doubt it went on "moderately" increasing.* It is, at all events, a specimen of the skill of Indian financiers, in extracting revenue from unresisting Ryots, and of the rapid progress by which, after once possessing a country, its revenue is run up to what is supposed or "estimated" to be the "standard rate."

At this time the village settlement appears to have been very generally introduced in the Madras provinces, and on much the same principles of a Russud, or increasing, Jumma, as above detailed, through each year of the lease.

The opinions of the ablest servants on that establishment were much divided as to the

* The average of the land Jumma, for example, of the three years preceding the triennial lease of Madura, is given at 127,133 Pagodas, whilst that of the triennial lease itself averaged 137,542 Pagodas, shewing, therefore, an increase on the whole period equal to 10,405 Pagodas per annum.

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advantages of triennial village leases, compared with the Ryotwar settlement. The Committee of the House of Commons incline very decidedly to the latter; and regret the change which had been introduced on the grounds of policy; fearing, as they add, that the power thus vested in Potails, renters, and heads of villages would enable them to exercise boundless tyranny and exaction over the other inhabitants. It received, however, the assent,. though somewhat qualified, of the Court of Directors in their letter to Fort St. George of the 11th December, 1811, and is the last change of system notified by the Committee of the House of Commons in their report of July, 1812.

In the selection of papers from India records, printed by the Court of Directors, and filling four large folio volumes, we find, among other documents, a minute by the Madras Rev. Board, in which the merits of the system are ably discussed. It appears from this minute, that at the expiration of the triennial leases, others were granted for a period of ten years, at a fixed annual Jumma to be declared permanent, if approved, by the Court of Directors. It is also admitted that the evils arising from the triennial settlements are to be ascribed, "not to its intrinsic principles,

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"but to *over assessment, which it must be* "*allowed has been justly condemned; for it was* "*nearly everywhere a mere rack-rent.*" It is remarkable that the Revenue Board ascribe this over assessment to the pressing orders of the Court of Directors, who required at this time a surplus revenue from the country of one million sterling; in consequence of which the triennial settlement was made with reference to the exorbitant rents of the Ryotwar surveys—"when all was taken from the peo- "ple that they were able to pay." Under the decennial leases, however, it is contended by the Revenue Board that these errors were rectified; the assessment generally reduced; the inhabitants satisfied; and that the system, in short, had generally answered the expectation of those by whom it was introduced.*

These latter conclusions, however, admit of considerable doubt. We have no general account of the Jumma, or the collections, under the decennial settlement; but there are sundry intimations on record, by which the former would appear not to have fallen far short of its predecessor the triennial, which is admitted to have been perfect rack-rent.

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* Selection of Papers from Ind. Rec. Vol. I. p. 943 to 947.

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In Cuddapah, one of the divisions of the Ceded Districts, the decennial settlement was founded on Col. Munro's survey valuation of the lands. It exceeded the average of eleven years preceding actual collections by $8\frac{6}{16}$ per cent.; and the average of the ten preceding years by $5\frac{1}{16}$ per cent., including, of course, the triennial period.*

In South Arcot, the Jumma of the villages permanently settled is stated to have fallen short of the actual collections under the triennial lease in the sum of 1300 star Pags. but to have exceeded the average of the ten preceding years (including the triennial lease) in the sum of 10,686 Pags. These ten years included one of dearth (1806-7) approaching to famine; and another year (1802-3) in which "over assessment is represented to have "proved in its consequences extremely in-"jurious to the prosperity of the district;" whilst, of the triennial lease, we are informed that it not only exceeded the average of the seven preceding years' collections by $9\frac{1}{16}$ per cent., but that to realize the revenue under the said lease, personal property of the renters and Ryots was sold for payment thereof to the amount of 103,353 Pagodas.† These

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 665. † Ibid. p. 615 to 626.

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are strong indications of a high, not to say oppressive Jumma, in the decennial settlement; notwithstanding which the abandonment of the Mouzawar or village settlement, as regards *its principle*, may still be regretted.*

The reader should understand that a village in India does not mean, as in this country, a small collection of houses in a particular spot, but a community of persons or corporation, with lands, more or less extensive, attached to it within well known registered limits, and having a chief, or Potail, as head man of the village, who regulates its internal economy, and acts as judge and magistrate of this little society.† Through the indefatigable exer-

* The Court of Directors declared their objection to the village, and preference of the Ryotwar, system, in their letter, 16th Dec. 1812, and even directed the Ryotwary to be adopted in all cases where the decennial might not, on the receipt of that order, have been carried into effect.

† There are several accounts on record of the constitution of an Indian Village—among others an interesting one in the fifth Report, which, to save the trouble of reference, is here subjoined:—"A village, geographically considered, is a tract of country comprising some hundreds, or thousands, of acres of arable and waste land; politically viewed it resembles a corporation or township. Its proper establishment of officers and servants consists of the following descriptions. The Potail, or head

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tions of the ablest of the Madras servants, it is now clearly proved, and admitted, that these

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" inhabitant, who has the general superintendence of the af-
" fairs of the village, settles the disputes of the inhabitants,
" attends to the police, and performs the duty already described,
" of collecting the revenues within his village,—a duty which
" his personal influence, and minute acquaintance with the
" situation and concerns of the people, renders him best qua-
" lified to discharge. The Curnum, who keeps the accounts
" of cultivation, and registers every thing connected with it.
" The Talliar and Totie; the duty of the former appearing to
" consist in a wider and more enlarged sphere of action, in
" gaining information of crimes and offences, and in escorting
" and protecting persons travelling from one village to another;
" the province of the latter appearing to be more immediately
" confined to the village, consisting among other duties, in
" guarding the crops, and assisting in measuring them. The
" Boundary Man, who preserves the limits of the village, or
" gives evidence concerning them in cases of dispute. The
" Superintendent of the Tanks and Watercourses distributes
" the water therefrom for the purposes of agriculture. The
" Brahmin; who performs the village worship. The school-
" master; who is seen teaching the children in the villages to
" read and write in the sand. The Calendar Brahmin, or
" Astrologer; who proclaims the lucky or unpropitious periods
" for sowing and threshing. The Smith and Carpenter; who
" manufacture the implements of agriculture, and build the
" dwelling of the Ryot. The Potman, or potter. The Fish-
" erman. The Barber. The Cowkeeper; who looks after the
" cattle. The Doctor. The Dancing Girl; who attends at
" rejoicings. The Musician and the Poet. These officers and
" servants generally constitute the establishment of a village;
" but in some parts of the country, it is of less extent, some

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lands are the actual private property of the villagers; some held by individual, others by copartnership, tenures, as will be more fully explained in the second chapter.* We also know, from the best authorities, the internal laws and rules by which this description of property was commonly managed. In the first place all the land of the country, whether arable, garden, or waste, is registered as belonging to some one village. This property, particularly in Nunjah land, † is watered by a

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" of the duties and functions above described being united in " the same person; in others it exceeds the number of indivi- " duals which have been described.

" Under this simple form of municipal government, the in- " habitants of the country have lived from time immemorial. " The boundaries of the villages have been but seldom altered; " and though the villages themselves have been sometimes in- " jured, and even desolated, by war, famine, or disease, the " same name, the same limits, and even the same families have " continued for ages. The inhabitants give themselves no " trouble about the breaking up and division of kingdoms; " while the village remains entire, they care not to what power " it is transferred, or to what sovereign it devolves; its internal " economy remains unchanged; the Potail is still the head in- " habitant, and still acts as the petty judge and magistrate, " and collector, or renter, of the village." Fifth Rep. p. 85.

* In all the provinces subject to the Madras Government, excepting Canara, Malabar, and Travancore, these village communities seem to have prevailed.

† Nunjah—wet land—land which from its situation may be irrigated, and therefore fit for the cultivation of rice. *Vide p.* 410.

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common stream. In the water, therefore, in the pasture and waste, there is *always* a community of interests, as well as in the cultivated land, generally. Lots are drawn in many villages, where the property is held in common, for the annual, triennial, or decennial occupation of land. All disbursements for the repair of tanks, and watercourses leading from these tanks; all labour for village work of general utility; all contribution for religious ceremonies; all the pay and labours of the village artizans and officers, are regulated by this communion of interest.

In this simple and interesting state of society, it is probable that many of the villagers would be connected in relationship. Community of interest would at all events inspire them with a kindlier feeling towards each other than could be expected from a stranger at their head, with motives and interests opposed to their own; and though an arrangement for collecting the revenue through the Potail, or Meerassadars, of the village, might vest them with some additional powers, it is not likely they would be exercised with so much severity, or error, as by a foreign Tehsildar, a Mootahdar, or farmer.

A village settlement is moreover made — or ought to be — with the actual proprietors of the

soil, either jointly, or with the Potail as their authorized representative, and is therefore a confirmation, not a violation as the other systems are, of their right of property.

It is also made—or ought to be—with the only persons who can by possibility know any thing of the real resources of the village; and therefore obviates all that fraud, collusion, boundless error, and inequality, which must inevitably attend the absurd attempt to survey, and value correctly, every field of every Ryot throughout so extensive and diversified a country as the provinces before alluded to.

Deficiencies too, whether arising from bad seasons, negligent husbandry, or other cause, may be more easily, and more securely, provided for, and made good, from a common stock, or by the members of a community, each having more or less interest in assisting others, than by an individual Ryot annually taxed to the utmost that he is enabled to pay.

Finally it appears, that wherever it has been submitted to the inhabitants of these districts to choose between a Mootahdary, a Ryotwary, or a Mouzawar settlement, they have decidedly preferred the latter, as being more consonant with their usages and institutions. Neither is it conceivable that a system so well adapted as this was, *in principle*, to

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the state of society in these countries, could have failed of success had it not involved the exaction of a rack-rent revenue, intolerable and destructive in all its effects.

That this was the real cause of failure may now be abundantly proved from official records. The assessment was in many instances so overstrained that the Potails, and principal villagers, as before noticed, declined the leases on the terms proposed; whereupon recourse was had to the old practice of letting the villages to foreign farmers or contractors. The refusal of the Potail, and head villagers, to concur in the triennial leases, may indeed be deemed conclusive as to the revenue demanded being excessive. The evil continued in full force throughout the decennial; for "the mere circumstance of a person having "been a renter under the triennial lease, "though prior to that arrangement he may "have been a strange adventurer, without "interest in the soil, or connection in the "place, gave him a title to supersede the "claims of the most respectable inhabitants, "and without reference either to hereditary "or established usage, he was interposed be-"tween them and the government."* On

* Mad. Rev. Sel., Vol. I. p. 646.

these transactions the Court of Directors observe, in their letter to Madras of the 12th April, 1815,* that "the great body of cultivators were placed in a considerable degree at "the mercy of a set of farmers of the revenue, who struggled to indemnify themselves, by means of rapacity, for the loss "they sustained in consequence of having "entered into improvident contracts."

It is impossible therefore to admit, that the mere change of Ryotwar to Mouzawar settlements (as contended by the advocates of the former,) can have occasioned the failure of the latter system. The mere change does not account for it on rational or specific grounds. It must therefore be ascribed to other errors; and, as over-assessment, with its consequences, (the introduction of merciless farmers, to the exclusion of lawful proprietors) is prominently presented to us, in every page, as an efficient and unanswerable cause, why trouble ourselves to seek for another?†

It is very true, as has been objected by the

* Mad. Rev. Sel., Vol. I. p. 638.

† It is a well-known common practice throughout India, in cases of periodical settlements for the farmers or renters to deteriorate the land towards the close of their lease, with a view to its being renewed on easier terms—a practice which is also obviously to be accounted for by over-assessment.

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adversaries of the village settlement, that great inconvenience and injustice have been sustained by the sale of whole villages—the joint property of a community—for arrears of revenue by default of one or two individuals only. It is also true, that this evil was not confined to Madras, but carried to a great extent in the Ceded and Conquered provinces under Bengal, to the enormous subversion of private rights, before the nature of the evil was discovered, or sufficiently understood; and though a remedy was attempted to be applied in 1811, it does not appear to have been effectual.* But the same injustice attended the sale of lands under the permanent Zemindary settlement; the rights of petty landholders, the real owners of the soil, were equally trampled on in both instances. And in a Ryotwar village, when the more industrious or fortunate inhabitants are called upon to make good the defaults of the indolent or the unlucky, or the default of one village exacted out of the resources of another, or a Ryot compelled to occupy and pay revenue on lands which it is neither his inclination nor his interest to cultivate, is the injustice less? In all these cases over-assessment stares us

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 640.

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again broadly in the face as the great grievance. In village settlements, more especially, had the assessment been moderate, the community would gladly have made good partial defaults rather than see their whole property sacrificed to strangers, and themselves reduced to beggary, or to become mere hired labourers on their own former patrimony; but where the assessment is intolerable, sales become inevitable; the innocent and the guilty are involved in a common destruction; and this perpetual craving after revenue, with the injuries and injustice it inflicts on the more helpless classes, is thus signalized, in each successive financial scheme, as the bane and reproach of our Indian administration.

SECTION XV.

NEW RYOTWAR SETTLEMENT.

New Ryotwar settlement.

Notwithstanding the arguments and favourable reports urged by the Madras government and Revenue Board in favour of the latter effects of the decennial village leases, the Court of Directors finally determined in 1817-18 to revert to "annual Ryotwar settlements,"

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and to introduce the same generally at the termination of the decennial village lease settlements, which, having commenced in 1811-12, would of course end in 1820-21. About this time, the great patron and advocate of the system, Sir Thomas Munro, was appointed first commissioner to carry the arrangements into effect; and afterwards promoted to be governor of Madras.

In the new Ryotwar settlement, the evils and errors of the former system were proposed to be corrected. A partial survey of a village or district, in each collectorship, was ordered to be made on the same principles as formerly laid down by Sir T. Munro; and, from that result, to fix a proportionate revenue for the whole province. Compulsion or restraint on the free labour of the Ryots, as formerly practised, was expressly forbidden. All the revenue officers were ordered to be specially warned against the improper assumption of power, or the exercise of undue influence, in the settlement, or collection, of the revenue. Instead of denying, as formerly, the existence of private property in the lands, the new system acknowledges that property to exist in most provinces, in a greater or less extent; and collectors are accordingly enjoined to guard against any infraction of the landed

tenures of the country. The assessment, which is admitted to have been generally excessive under the former system, was ordered to be reduced to a rate "calculated to give "encouragement to agricultural industry, "thereby to promote the general prosperity "of the country." The extra assessment of 10 per cent. on the more fortunate and industrious Ryots, to compensate government for the failure of the more extravagant or unfortunate, was also ordered to be discontinued; government renouncing the principle of taking "from the Ryot all that he is able to pay, "and desiring now only to receive a fair "revenue from the land he cultivates."

In view to the greater convenience and protection of the Ryots — the courts of justice being altogether ill adapted for the purpose, — it was now deemed advisable to vest collectors with primary and summary jurisdiction in all cases before cognizable by summary process in the Zillah courts. They (the collectors) were accordingly empowered to take primary cognizance of all matters or disputes relative to the occupancy,* cultivation and

* There are clauses in the regulations here referred to, which some persons may think no small infringement of the right of property. By Reg. V. of 1822, landed proprietors are

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irrigation of lands, arrears of rent, rates of assessment, distraints, &c. or to refer such cases to Punchayets (arbitration); and likewise to take primary cognizance of all malversations, embezzlements, extortions, corrupt or illegal receipts, falsification, destruction, or concealment of accounts by native public officers, village servants, &c.

The duties of police had before this been entrusted to collectors, Tehsildars, Zemindars, heads of villages, &c. The power of the Tehsildar to fine for trivial offences was now extended to a sum not exceeding 3 Rupees — and heads of villages now authorized to punish petty thefts not exceeding one Rupee.*

Extensive powers are thus conferred on the public functionaries of the Revenue Depart-

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prohibited from ousting Ryots (their tenants) without leave of the collector; neither can they raise their rents on Ryots beyond what may be deemed the usual rates for lands of the same quality. Where claimants of disputed lands or crops shall proceed to open affray with "swords, sticks, or other "weapons," so that any person shall be "killed, wounded, or "violently beaten," (justifiable self-defence being of course excepted) the lands or crops so disputed shall be declared forfeited to Government, and the parties on both sides committed for trial before the criminal court.

* Vide Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 947 to 951, Vol. III. p. 556 to 565. and Reg. IV. of 1821, and V. and IX. of 1822.

ment. Under existing regulations they unite in their own persons the important offices of judge, police officer, and tax-gatherer—each in their respective circles.

Of these orders it may be observed, that they indicate the same benevolent intentions as are to be traced in various other despatches of the Court of Directors, and of the governments and revenue boards abroad; but what the author of these sheets contends for, is, that good intentions, sound doctrines, laws and regulations, can only be of limited avail, in the teeth of a system of revenue fraught with innumerable evils, every one of which may be clearly deduced from the exorbitant amount and practical operation of the tax which that system imposes; that it is vain to expect laws and regulations can have any thing more than a partial and restricted influence, where a handful of Europeans, however able, upright, and zealous, are thinly scattered to administer them, among a numerous population, in whom the habits of corruption and extortion, evasion and slavish submission, are firmly rooted by institutions which we ourselves have perpetuated; and that surveys, professing to give an accurate account of the extent, quality, boundaries, and produce of every description of lands,

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cultivated and waste, with the tenures and rights of the occupants or owners, and other matters contained in the instructions to surveyors, assessors, &c. are mere fallacies.

In a minute by Sir Thomas Munro, and letter from the government of Fort St. George, of 21st June, 1822, we accordingly find that only a few of the districts had been regularly surveyed; that in some nothing had been done; that in others, surveys of detached parts had been made; and that different standards of measurement had been adopted in different districts, and sometimes even in the same districts.

Sir T. Munro, however, was now of opinion that the want of a regular survey is no obstruction to the introduction of a Ryotwar settlement. But if this dispensation with surveys be deemed an inconsistency, compared with his former reports, what are we to think when he adds, as his reason for it, that the village accounts — accounts which, on former occasions, he had denounced as a mass of falsehood — would furnish the necessary information?

In a letter from the Court of Directors of 18th August, 1824, it is further stated that the survey of a particular village, in the Zillah of Chingleput, employed an active

surveyor upwards of one year and eight months; whence the labour required to accomplish a general survey appeared, they add, to render it impracticable. They, therefore, concur with the opinion of the Revenue Board that the Putcut plan of Ryotwar settlement is the preferable one; Putcut being the assessment of the whole land or farm of a Ryot in one sum — in other words, a valuation or assessment by estimate.

In respect to the Jumma, it is stated that over-assessment prevailed very generally; yet a certain amount of revenue being always indispensable, it does not appear, as far at least as the printed documents go, that any material reduction took place; in some instances, the new assessment exceeded the realizations of former years,* notwithstanding the injunctions of the Court of Directors to be satisfied with a fair and moderate Jumma.

How far this system may succeed in time to come, it will be for future official documents to attest; but it is not a little remarkable that it should have received the unqualified assent of the Court of Directors, who, in August, 1809, passed the followed clear judgment on

* Selection of Papers from Ind. Rec. Vol. II. 509—550. 552, 553.

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the principles and operation of Ryotwar settlements generally:

Paragraph 135. "The report of Lieutenant-Colonel Munro, referred to in this paragraph, has clearly explained to us that of which we were not distinctly informed before, the means by which he, as collector, was enable to make a separate annual settlement for the land rent, with each individual, of the very numerous class of people cultivating the soil in his district. We find that almost the whole of a minute and extensive process of investigation and superintendence, from the individual to the village, and from one village to all the villages and towns of a collectorate, is performed by the medium of native agents, the tradesmen, accountants, arbitrating inhabitants, and Peons of those villages, with the Tehsildars, or inspectors, and sub-collectors of larger divisions; all whose proceedings for ascertaining the agricultural stock of each Ryot, the allotment of land to be made to each, his management of his cultivation, the crop realized, and the comparative excess or deficiency in the produce of the season, are in succession submitted to the observation of the collector, who, as the immediate representative of government,

" settles, after the quality of the first crop is " seen, the rate of rent, and, according to the " final result of the season, the amount to be " ultimately paid.

" This system has every appearance of " being derived from remote antiquity, and it " seems congenial to the character and habits " of the people; but to be *more suited to an " early and simple state of society than to the " condition of India in modern times, and its " true interest under a fostering and enlightened " government.*

" The very great number of native agents " who must be employed in the execution of " this system, and the common interests " which the Ryots or cultivators of the soil " of all descriptions have to deceive the go- " vernment, as well as the temptations to " unfaithfulness, to which Tehsildars and " Curnums, must ever be exposed, together " with the difficulty of adjusting the rents to " all the varieties of seasons, and public " events, favourable, or adverse, constitute " strong objections to the use of the system " as an established mode for collecting the " revenues of the country; and the principle " of assessing the defalcations of individual " Ryots upon the lands of the rest of the in- " habitants of a village, must be liable to

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" great abuse, and was made in the Bengal " provinces an instrument of such severe op- " pression, as to become one of the early " objects of reform under our administration " of that country.

" On the whole, although we continue in " the opinion expressed in our revenue letter " of the 6th November, 1805, that the Kulwar " system intelligently followed up, is well " calculated to discover the resources of a " country, yet we also think that, after it has " answered that end, *it is not to be preferred* " *for constant practice;* and the doubt which " Lieut.-Col. Munro has properly stated, whe- " ther it be equally fitted for the improvement " of a country as the discovery of its actual " resources, we are strongly inclined to be- " lieve is to be resolved in the negative." *

In the arrangements adopted for the new Ryotwar settlement at Madras, we are let into some further details regarding the survey, classification and valuation of lands, which it is of importance here to notice. I shall merely refer to one or two of the experimental surveys in districts where they are said to have been accomplished on the precise principles laid down by Col. Munro for the Ceded

* Madras Rev. Sel. Vol. I . p. 598.

Districts. The village of Covoor in the Nellore collectorship was fixed upon for one of these experimental surveys.

In the classification of lands in the Ceded Districts the wet lands were divided into eight sorts (*See p.* **457**). The 1st sort, it is now stated, yielding 40-fold; 2nd sort 35-fold; and so on down to the 8th sort, yielding five-fold.

But in Nellore it was found that only *parts* of a field would yield 40 or 35-fold; whence 30-fold was taken as the average of 1st sort land; and five-fold for the 5th sort; the classification being thus reduced to five sorts instead of eight.*

The discretion of surveyors seems again to have been the only guide in the execution of this work. It was rendered still more vague from the circumstance of the fertility or produce of these lands depending in each season on the quantity of water with which they might, or could, be supplied, whether by natural or artificial means.

In respect to the assessment, it was "*found* "*impracticable to ascertain correctly the pro-* "*duce of each field.*" All the collector could do was, from the Curnum's accounts, to estimate the quantity of seed sown in each sort

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. III. p. 510 et seq.

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of land, and to rate the produce accordingly. The justness of this estimate would obviously depend on two points, — the correct classification of the lands, and the faith to be placed in the Curnum's accounts — neither of which unfortunately were entitled to the least credit. The produce, however, being thus determined, it was divided as follows: 6½ per cent. was first deducted for expences; and the remainder divided between government and the cultivator, in the proportion of 55 per cent. to the former, and 45 only to the latter.

Again, the government share being commuted into money, commonly called a "Teerwa "rent," calculated on an average price of grain, but at a higher rate than the inhabitants approved, it appears that the Jumma of the district surveyed considerably exceeded the average revenue of 12 years during the Nabob's government, and likewise of 16 years during that of the Company.

The inhabitants being unwilling to take Cowles or Pottahs from the collector at this rate of "Teerwa rent," he observes upon it —"it is apprehended that 10 per cent. must "be allowed to induce their consenting "every year to take their lands" — adding — "if this is not consented to by the Circar

" (government) the inhabitants will require " the share of 45 per cent. in kind."

The Revenue Board deeming the assessment too high, sanctioned the deduction of 10 per cent.

If additional proof were required, we have here a sufficiency to be satisfied how liable such a system must be to error in the classification of lands — how liable to fraud and collusion from wilfully misplacing them — how liable to over-assessment from over-estimate of the land itself, or over-valuation of its produce when commuted into a " Teerwa rent"— and what a perpetual tendency there must be to over-assessment from the constant anxiety of collectors to " improve" the revenues of the districts committed to their charge, and for which no means exist but by exacting from Ryots all that they are able to pay.

But though this " Teerwa rent" was settled on an assumed average price of grain in each district, it was still liable to variation; the principle adopted in this respect being " that " no addition should be made to the assess- " ment, unless the price of grain should rise " 10 per cent., but that a deduction should be " allowed if it should fall 5 per cent. the " degree of addition or deduction to corre- " spond with the alteration in the price."

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By what rule this experimental survey was extended to other villages, or how it was made to apply to the great variety of soils and products, throughout the whole collectorship we are not informed. We must, therefore, conclude that as it began, so it proceeded, and ended, in "conjectural estimate."

In the arrangement for Trichinopoly, an experimental survey was ordered of the village of Tertaloor; and, on the same principles as above described, the lands were classed into five sorts; but after all the labour and expence of surveying, measuring, classifying, and assessing, the revenue of the village was ultimately fixed (as occurred in the Ceded Districts) on an average of the actual realizations for 16 years preceding, and the aggregate amount—say 3043 Rupees on the Nunja lands—was then subdivided as follows:—

	Rup.	Anas.
On Kurshal or 1st Class	1167	6
Shavil or 2nd ditto	1338	3
Manul or 3rd ditto	489	3
Kalur or 4th ditto	45	9
Sookan or 5th ditto	2	15
	3043	4

Now in what does this differ from the subdivision of a village assessment, which is first

settled for a gross sum, and then subdivided as above? It differs in this, that the village subdivision is made by the only persons who are, or can be, acquainted with the real value, produce, and tenure of the lands. In the Ryotwary, it is made by ignorant or corrupt surveyors and assessors, who neither do, nor can, know any thing of either. In the village subdivision the greatest possible economy is observed, whilst the Ryotwary involves a heavy and useless expence to the state. For the village arrangements few native revenue servants are, or ought to be, required; for the Ryotwary, hosts of harpies are let loose upon the country; whose rapacity it is impossible effectually to controul.

In these observations it is not intended to deny that Potails, and head men of villages may, as the representatives of their respective communities, have often abused the trusts reposed in them to the great injury of inferior Ryots. In a society so taxed, and impoverished, as that of India, where every individual is so absorbed in self-preservation as to sympathize but little with his neighbours, the case can hardly be otherwise. But it is contended (more especially if the land-tax were really moderate) that Potails, with the dread before their eyes of losing for

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ever, on conviction of rapacity or extortion, a profitable, influential, and hereditary office, are less likely to transgress than foreign renters, who care not a fig for the district, or its inhabitants, beyond the expiration of their lease; or than a Tehsildar, whose chief object must always be to foster and increase his own official gains.

Although the Board of Revenue were anxious on this, as on other occasions, to lower the assessment as much as might be compatible with the indispensable wants of Government; they still apprehended, as late as 27th Nov. 1820, that "whatever Govern-"ment remitted would be collected from the "Ryots both by the servants of the Cutchery, "and those of the villages."* The enormous peculations discovered of late years in Coimbetore, Salem, Rajahmundry, and other parts, justified the belief; and though precautions were taken, by means of fresh enactments, to avert the evil, it may be feared that they are not, or rather that they cannot be, an effectual protection.

If then certainty, equality, economy in collection, and convenience to the payers of a tax, together with the abstraction from Ryots

* Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. III. p. 556.

of the least possible amount over and above what is paid into the Exchequer, be deemed elements of a just system of taxation, financiers, one would think, could hardly have devised a scheme more completely in discordance with these approved maxims than the Ryotwary is. It in fact conforms to neither. The tax is every where a mere "conjectural estimate," founded on the pretended labours of ignorant or corrupt assessors, or on the information of villagers and resident occupants, who from its oppressive amount must ever be interested to deceive, and liable to all the abuses of uncontrouled official power.

It is, therefore, difficult to conceive a motive for its adoption beyond that of keeping open, or *seeming* to keep open, a door for the participation by Government of any future encrease that may take place in the cultivation of the country. But let the Court of Directors consider whether such an expectation is not altogether delusive. If under a Ryotwar settlement we take from the Ryots all they are enabled to pay, where is the stock, where the capital to come from, necessary to encrease or improve the culture of the lands? or if stock and capital were not altogether deficient, what motive can men have to add to their own labours, when from

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two-thirds to nine-tenths of the profits are sure to be absorbed by Government; or, if the adventure prove unfortunate, they themselves must bear the whole loss?

SECTION XVI.

WESTERN SIDE OF INDIA.

WESTERN SIDE OF INDIA.

On the Western side of India, until the year 1792, there was no territory of any consequence or extent, subject to the Company's government. Salsette, a beautiful and fertile island, annexed to Bombay, and which might, under a different system, have been a garden, from the overflowing wealth of the rich merchants of the Presidency, was subjected, and still is, to so rigorous a system of revenue, as just to allow the cultivators of the soil to rise above the level of actual starvation, and to render this beauteous spot the abode of tigers, and of squalid poverty. A limited circle also encompassed our commercial factories established along the coast.

After the last Mahratta war a considerable accession of territory was acquired by the Company on the western side of India. Our possessions in Guzerat, Malwa, the Concan,

and other parts of the Deccan, are now very extensive. Into these countries the same revenue and judicial systems have been introduced as into the other parts of India before described—that is, the highest possible revenue that can be extracted from the land, according to the mode adopted by our predecessors; with judicial courts introduced into some of the districts, and intended to be ultimately extended to all, on the plan of those established in the Bengal and Madras provinces. To detail these arrangements may be quite unnecessary after the particulars already given of our universal system. As regards the Western side of India I shall, therefore, confine myself to the provinces of Malabar and Canara, in which certain peculiarities exist of great importance to be noticed in this, and in the second chapter.

SECTION XVII.

MALABAR.

At the peace of 1792, the provinces of Malabar and Cochin were ceded to the British government. Hyder Aly had possessed himself of the country in 1766; instigated by the spirit of conquest; but invited, in the first in-

stance, by the Paulghaut Raja, to protect him against an equally insatiable spirit of conquest from within, in the person of the Zamorin Raja,* whose rage for extending his dominions proved the cause of his downfal. The history of this transaction is indeed a fair specimen of the invariable, and universal, spirit of Asiatic despotism. The same thirst of extension pervades the whole, whether Mahommedan or Hindoo; and war succeeds war, with all its attendant calamities, until the stronger swallows up the weaker power.

It has been already remarked that, previously to the Mahommedan conquest, there existed in Malabar a regular aristocracy of landed proprietors, having the most indisputable, and undisputed, title to their respective estates. With the administration of Hyder, and his son Tippoo, the principles of Mussulman finance were also introduced; and with so much rigour had the revenue been exacted by the Mussulman officers, that when the Mysore war, of 1790, broke out, all the principal

* The Zamorin, or Samorry, Raja is the lineal descendant of a soldier of fortune, who once served Perumal, a former sovereign of Malabar, and who received from his master a sword, and some land in the neighbourhood of Calicut, directing him to use the former, for the extension of his possessions, and to take to himself all that it should enable him to acquire.

landholders (viz. Rajas, Namboories, Nambyars, Nayrs, and Jenmkars,) had been driven from their estates, to take refuge in the adjoining dominions;—an emigration, which had been still further promoted by attempts on the part of Tippoo, during the later years of his government, to circumcise, and convert to Islamism, the whole of his Hindoo subjects. These provinces, when ceded to us by Tippoo, were valued in the schedule at the annual Jumma of 944,756 Canterai Hoons, or 2,834,268 Rupees; though this revenue had never been realized. MALABAR.

Arshed Beg Khan having been appointed Foujdar* of Malabar, in 1783, his administration is spoken of with more respect by the natives than that of any other of their Mussulman governors; but whatever his natural disposition may have been, he knew that royal despots were not to be served, and satisfied, without enormous revenues. His assessment of the lands was accordingly very high; but professing to be fixed on principles that wore, comparatively speaking, the appearance of moderation, it has always been

* Foujdar—a police magistrate under the Moghul government, who took cognizance of all criminal matters, and was sometimes employed as receiver-general of the revenues.

MALABAR. referred to as a kind of standard for the collections.

The principles professed by Arshed Beg were shortly these, viz. that of the gross produce of the soil, there should be allotted to the farmer, or cultivator . . . . . 5½ tenths.
To the Jenmkar, or landed proprietor . . . . . 1½ tenths.
To the Government . . . . . 3 tenths.
In principle, there was something here left for the Jenmkar, or proprietor; but in practice it is to be apprehended, if it be not certain, that the Jenmkar's share was absorbed, either by the government, or fraudulently by its officers for their own use; inasmuch as the class of Hindoo landed proprietors had, in 1790, almost entirely disappeared.

For the settlement of these provinces, when ceded to the Company, a commission was appointed, consisting of two Bengal, and two Bombay servants; whose proceedings are recorded at considerable length in a valuable report addressed to the Supreme Government under date 11th October, 1793.

In this report we find that the Bengal servants brought with them the principle, and inculcated on the Bombay collectors, that the Company, as sovereign lords of the soil, were every where entitled to fifty per cent. of the

gross produce as a land tax; but the difficulties of realizing it in such a country as Malabar, were insurmountable. Arshed Beg's Jumma was therefore always looked to. Our first settlement fell short of Tippoo's Jummabundy by about 200,000 Hoons, or 600,000 Rupees. Our attention, however, being always fixed on a high revenue, our efforts to realize it were at length met by open rebellion, which lasted for some years; and was attended by a heavy cost of life, and treasure. An overwhelming force, aided by an efficient police corps under the orders of, and indeed formed by, an able and active Bombay officer, Captain Watson, at length put down the rebellion; and in 1800, the province was transferred from the Bombay, to the Madras government. MALABAR.

On this occasion a distinguished Ryotwar collector was appointed principal collector of the province; with sub-collectors, and assistants, under him, and with power to administer justice in civil causes; all criminal cases being made cognizable by the commanding officer of the troops. One of the principal collector's earliest measures was a survey of the country, on the principles of the Ryotwar settlement above described. The collector of the southern division, Mr. Warden, fortu-

nately, and judiciously contrived to ward off this survey, by undertaking within his limits to collect, from the inhabitants, the amount of Arshed Beg's Jumma.

In the Northern, and central, districts, the survey was prosecuted under a series of urgent complaints, and representations, by the inhabitants. A table of coins, current in Malabar, was at the same time issued, in which the value of the coins was arbitrarily fixed; and so erroneously, that in some of them, the value of pure gold to silver was as thirteen, and in others as sixteen, to one. The most current coins in the province were gold and silver Fanams: and the arbitrary alteration in their current value had the effect of raising the revenue (which was assessed in Fanams) twenty per cent. on all payments in gold, and ten in silver. The attempt to enforce these offensive measures, at length excited another more furious, and more extensive rebellion than before, in the last two mentioned divisions; on which the principal collector relinquished his situation, and repaired to Madras.

When the province was first settled by the joint commissioners, it was left to be administered by a supervisor, and two superintendants, with assistants, &c.; and the Bengal revenue and judicial regulations were introduced, with

certain modifications to adapt them to the new acquisitions, and to this particular form of government. MALABAR.

On the transfer of this province to Madras, that government proposed to introduce the code then in force throughout their territories; by which the revenue and judicial departments were separated. The superior court, or court of appeal and circuit, had accordingly been nominated, at this time, for Malabar; but the Madras government awaited the final revenue settlement of the province, before appointing the intended Zillahs, or inferior courts.

When the principal collector therefore retired, the duties of his office devolved on the chief judge of the superior court; who, under the orders, and confirmation, of government, united again the chief revenue and judicial authority in his own person. The rebellion having shortly afterwards subsided, all the chief Brahmins, and landed proprietors, of the country, were invited to assemble at the principal collector's Cutchery. A most respectable body were, on this occasion, got together; and a few of the leading men being selected by themselves to confer with the principal collector on certain points connected with the future administration of the province, it was finally agreed, on an offer made by the landholders themselves,

to recommend to government that the revenues should in future be collected on the principle that, after allowing to the farmer or cultivator the usual share of the gross produce of each farm or estate, four tenths of the remainder being the Patoom, or net rent, should go to the Jenmkar, or landlord, and six tenths to government. On this, as a declared principle, the revenues have been since collected.

At the time of the abovementioned assembly of the principal natives of Malabar, another arrangement was adopted which was very acceptable to them. Zillah courts not having yet been established, the principal collector divided the country into small collectorships, each to be superintended by one of his assistants; and with a view of extending European influence more generally through the province, it was proposed, and agreed, that all causes of dispute and litigation between natives, in these several circles, should be decided in the first instance by a Punchayet on the spot, to be superintended in all cases by the European assistant of the Circle; who, in the event of appeal (which was also provided for) to the principal collector's Cutchery, was to furnish a copy of the proceedings, and decision thereon, by the Punchayet. This system was afterwards superseded by the introduction of

the Bengal code of regulations, which have been ever since in force in the province, with all the disadvantages, as well as advantages, of that particular system. MALABAR.

The principal collector being shortly after obliged to quit Malabar, Mr. Warden, from the southern division, was appointed his successor, and very ably and successfully administered the affairs of the province for a series of years. During Mr. Warden's principal collectorship, other propositions appear to have been submitted to the Madras government for fresh surveys and admeasurement of the lands, with a view to correct inequalities in the assessment. For this purpose, Mr. Warden had collected ample materials and a great body of minute information; but with a degree of consideration, which does honour to his judgment, as well as to his humanity, he represented to the Revenue Board at Madras, and the Revenue Board adopted the recommendation,* that to attempt a survey, with a view to equalize the rates of assessment at this late period, might be dangerous as well as unjust; that though he was aware the assessment, on which he had been long collecting, was in many instances unequal, he thought it a lesser evil to

* Vide Madras Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 892.

submit to this inequality than to disturb the value of property, which a survey would arbitrarily do, in a vast number of instances, where estates, for example, had been mortgaged, or sold, or bequeathed, or changed hands under decrees of a Court of Justice, and at a value proportioned to the revenue then collected from them; which of course regulated the landlord's rent. Although the materials in Mr. Warden's possession would have enabled him, on an actual survey, to have greatly increased the Jumma of his collectorship, he preferred doing an act of justice to the inhabitants, to the fame which "improvement" of revenue would have brought on himself; and contented himself with such improvements only as could be realized from cultivation being extended to lands formerly waste; and the resumption of such as had been fradulently alienated.

In the mean time, or in 1812, we find it attested in reports of local authorities, that the inhabitants had been reduced to great distress in consequence of existing revenue arrangements: more especially of the monopolies on timber, tobacco, and salt; and the taxes on spirituous liquors, toddy extractors, stamped paper, and legal proceedings.

Down to 1817-18, the same evils are repre-

sented to exist; and to be in a great measure occasioned by the monopolies and extra duties. A statement is given to shew the proportion which these additional burthens bear to the land revenue; it is as follows: MALABAR.

	Land Rev.	Additional Rev.	Total.
1817 . . Pags.	487,663 . .	231,962 . .	719,625
1818 . . Pags.	469,909 . .	217,263 . .	687,172

Of the tobacco monopoly, it is stated, that the article being grown in Coimbatore, to maintain the Malabar monopoly, it was necessary to have a monopoly in Coimbatore also. Smuggling to a great extent was the consequence. Severe punishments ensued, and numerous instances of death by imprisonment in the jails.

In Colonel Munro's report on Malabar, as first commissioner, dated 4th July, 1817,† we learn that the salt monopoly was grievously complained of, inasmuch as it debarred several landholders, whose estates were favourably situated for the purpose, from the manufacture of the article; and because frauds were committed by the native servants employed in this department on the importers of the commodity

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* Madras Rev. Sel. Vol. III. p. 538. 541.

† Madras Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 852, 853. 856. These frauds are stated to have exceeded 100,000 Pagodas in five years.

to a vast extent; all of which, it was asserted, were embezzlements by the servants in question for their own use.

Colonel Munro also mentions loud complaints on account of inequalities in the assessment, occasioned, as he says, by changes which time and circumstances had brought about. In some instances, the whole produce was not equal to the discharge of the rent. Some lands were swept away by mountain torrents; others overflowed by the sea, and rendered unproductive; and others abandoned by the proprietors on account of over-assessment. But a most grievous evil to a Malabarian (as the author well knows) arose from the practice latterly introduced of selling lands, as in Bengal, for arrears of revenue—a practice quite novel in Malabar, and at variance with the ancient laws and usages of this extraordinary people. A Nayr's estate in Malabar (of which Colonel Munro, however, does not appear to have been aware) has, from time immemorial, been held and treated as allodial property; the term by which it is designated, *Jenm*, meaning allodial in its strictest sense; and such has always been the veneration of the proprietors for it, that they have never been known to dispose, by sale, of their Jenm right, unless driven to it by the extremity of

distress. Estates have been commonly mortgaged to the full extent of the landlord's rent, and the mortgagees have held possession for several generations; but whenever the family of the Jenmkar was enabled to discharge the mortgage, the estate was invariably resumed. To sell property of this description for arrears of revenue must, therefore, have been sorely felt.* MALABAR.

To remedy these evils, and with a view to other reforms, one of which went the length of re-modelling the structure of society in Malabar, by introducing a system of village government with hereditary offices, analogous to the village municipalities of other parts of India—a system well calculated, as was supposed, to facilitate Ryotwar surveys and assessments, but quite foreign to the ancient

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* Colonel Munro gives an account of balances, amounting to Rup. 1970..3..56, due by eighty-six different landholders, which were discharged in the following manner:—

"By the sale of personal effects ..... Rup.	99	3	93
"..... forty-two rice fields	958	1	42
"..... ninety-four gardens	912	2	21
Rup.	1970	3	56"

The rice fields alone (Colonel Munro adds) were purchased by the late owners for more than four times the amount they now sold for.

institutions of this province—a commissioner, Mr. Græme, was deputed in 1820, and, on his report of the state of the province, re-deputed in 1822, to carry into effect his own suggestions. Accordingly, another Ryotwar survey of the country was made in 1823, or rather a triple survey, similar to that adopted by Col. Munro in the ceded districts. First, the country being divided into Deshums, or villages, for the purpose of introducing the village administration above-mentioned, the person intended for the office of Deshadegar (or Potail) was sent forth, aided by a Menon (or accountant) and the Mookistenmars (or elders of the Deshum), whose survey was first accomplished. To examine and correct the errors of this survey, the Tehsildar (native collector) of the district was next sent forth, with about as much knowledge of the business and honesty as his predecessor; and, finally, the officers of the Huzzoor (head) Cutchery; men, who were probably, as they generally are, able and conversant in accounts, but utterly ignorant of the value and productions of land.

Against this survey and assessment, when completed and put in force, the inhabitants, having been disarmed in consequence of previous rebellions, had nothing to oppose but

representation and complaint. Finding no redress from the authorities on the spot, they deputed a Vakeel, or delegate, with a petition, to represent their grievances at Madras, where the landholders of the province tendered their estates to government, urging them to take the property off their hands, allowing them curry and rice in return, i. e. a bare maintenance, rather than enforce the payment of the survey revenue. Here, however, the inhabitants were equally unsuccessful; and the revenue continued to be collected on a Pymashee, or survey, proved to be full of inaccuracies. Having myself been principal collector of Malabar, and made, during my residence in the province, minute inquiries into the produce and assessment of lands, I was enabled to ascertain beyond all doubt, and to satisfy the revenue board at Madras, that in the former survey of the province, which led to the rebellion, lands and produce were inserted in the pretended survey account, which absolutely did not exist; while other lands were assessed to the revenue at more than their actual produce. Yet, on these fabricated accounts, were Pottahs forced on the inhabitants, and the revenues therein specified attempted at least to be rigorously exacted. MALABAR.

Of the last survey, or that accomplished in

 1823, the instructions to the surveyors contain some features worthy of remark. In the first place, the first surveyors were not paid officers, as in the Ceded Districts; but sent forth in the quintessence of public spirit to perform their duty gratis, with a promise to get appointments under the new system, provided they executed their task to the satisfaction of their employers.

The lands were ordered to be surveyed and measured, as under Colonel Munro's Ryotwar plan; but the lands in North Malabar, being mostly tree plantations, such as cocoa-nut trees, betel trees, and pepper vines, all yielding fruit and paying revenue, a most minute and detailed account of these was required. Allowance was to be made for young trees, the different ages of which were even required to be stated; but trees beginning to bear fruit, and trees in full bearing, trees in good and bad soil, in favourable and unfavourable situations, were all ordered to be assessed at one and the same rate. If the landlords objected to the assessment on trees, because old and past bearing, *these were, one and all, ordered to be cut down;* nothing being allowed to stand that did not yield revenue to the state. To judge of this order, it should be known that the trees above-mentioned are va-

luable, and commonly used, for building in Malabar. To fell all the timber of a man's estate, even when no demand for it existed in the market, and merely because its stream of revenue had been drained, is an odd way of conferring benefits, and protecting property; whilst of pepper vines, it will hardly be believed that they were now ordered to be assessed, and the assessment proved immoderate, although the principal collector, by proclamation dated 20th May, 1806, announced to the inhabitants, by command of the government, that in order to promote the growth and trade in pepper, which was then greatly depressed, the tax was for ever abolished, "and the vines bestowed on the growers *in* "*free and perpetual gift.*"* MALABAR.

The reader will, perhaps, better judge of the inquisitorial nature of one of these surveys, or Pymashees as they are termed in Malabar, by knowing that upwards of seventy different kinds of buildings—the houses, shops, or warehouses, of different casts, and professions—were ordered to be entered in the survey accounts; besides the following "imple-

* Since writing the above, I have learned by private advices from India, that the pepper tax, after being collected for a time, has been again ordered to be given up.

MALABAR. " ments of professions," which were usually assessed to the public revenue, viz. :—

Oil mills.	Blacksmith's anvils.
Potter's kiln.	Small fishing boats.
Sawyer's saw.	Large ditto.
Barber's hone.	Salt storehouse.
Cocoa-nut safe.	Toddy-drawer's stills.
Carpenter's tools.	Goldsmith's tools.
Looms.	Fishing nets.
Iron manufactory..	Pack bullocks.
Washerman's stone.	Cottonbeater's bow.

Toddy-drawer's knives.*

In the assessment of these articles, as well as in the collection of the tax, it is sufficiently manifest that there is abundant room for indefinite abuse and oppression.

I am enabled to subjoin a statement, for the entire accuracy of which I can vouch, of the actual produce of an estate in Malabar, compared with the revenue assessed on it, for a period of ten years ; to which the reader's attention is particularly requested.

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* These are all of the nature of the Mohturfa tax, described in *page* 500.

Gross Produce of Garden Lands, and Net Produce of Rice Lands for Ten Years, from 1815 to 1824, with the Revenue thereon.

Produce.	1814—15	1815—16	1816—17	1817—18	1818—19	1819—20	1820—21	1821—22	1822—23	1823—24	*Total for 10 Years.*	*Average per Ann.*	*Annual Revenue Paid.*	*Landlord's Share, & for Expences of Cultivation.*
	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	Rs. Q. R.	
Cocoa Nuts - -	173 0 0	65 2 40	147 0 0	250 2 40	77 2 80	163 1 20	364 1 78	495 3 59	330 2 10	390 0 80	2458 1 7	245 3 30	246 2 72	
Betel Nuts - -	20 2 40	13 1 32	20 0 38	31 0 0	45 2 40	87 3 20	93 1 32	5 1 60	11 2 0	29 3 60	358 2 22	35 3 22	119 0 74	
Jacks - - -	57 2 92	54 0 50	68 1 20	28 2 40	49 0 16	102 0 0	92 1 3	158 1 12	189 1 0	350 2 0	1150 0 33	115 0 3	123 0 85	
Rents - - -	310 1 80	372 0 50	407 1 0	318 1 32	247 2 40	108 3 20	95 0 0	51 3 20	58 3 20	54 3 20	2024 3 82	202 2 0		
Rupees - - -	561 3 12	505 0 72	642 2 58	628 2 12	419 3 76	461 3 60	645 0 18	711 1 51	590 0 30	825 1 60	5991 3 44	599 0 74	489 0 31	110 0 43
Rice Lands.														
Dung.														
Rents in Kind 6629														
Deduct waste 370														
Dungalis - 6259														
Making Seers 7300	219 0 0	197 0 40	175 0 80	175 0 80	259 0 60	219 0 0	255 2 0	277 1 60	178 3 40	219 0 0	2175 1 60	217 2 16	153 1 20	64 0 96
Total Rupees -	780 3 12	702 1 12	817 3 38	803 2 92	679 0 36	680 3 60	900 2 13	988 3 11	768 3 70	1044 1 60	8167 1 4	816 2 90	642 1 51	174 1 39
Market Price of Grain per. Mil. Seers	30 0 0	27 0 0	24 0 0	24 0 0	35 2 0	30 0 0	35 0 0	38 0 0	24 2 0	30 0 0		29 3 20	*Govt. valuation* 45 0 0	

ABSTRACT.

	Rs. Q. R.
10 Years' Produce - -	8167 1 4
10 Years' Revenue - -	6423 3 10
Landlord's Share - -	1743 1 94

	Rs. Q. R.
Government Valuation of Grain, per Mil.	45 0 0
Average Market Price for 10 Years -	29 3 20
Excess 50¼ per Cent. - - -	15 0 80

	Rs. Q. R.
New Assessment of 1824, on Cocoa Nuts	368 3 44
on Betel Nuts	48 2 0
on Jacks -	263 0 0
	680 1 44
Gross Produce - - -	599 0 74
Excess of Assessment - -	81 0 70

To give the reader correct notions of the nature of these pretended surveys, let him compare the two last columns but one of the preceding statement, and he will there see that the annual revenue exacted from these lands was actually *more than four-fifths of the average gross produce*, leaving, therefore, not one-fifth for the landlord, and the expenses of cultivation. In like manner, about four-fifths of the *net* produce of rice lands was also absorbed by the government tax, leaving one-fifth only to the landlord.

This was the case previous to the new survey in 1823, and, without some collateral advantage, it is obvious that it would have been worth no man's while to hold, or to cultivate, these lands. Down to the year 1823, the proprietor had the collateral advantage of holding his pepper plantations free of tax; and it was this, and this alone, that enabled him to proceed with the culture of his other lands.

But when the new assessment took effect, or in 1824, the rates laid on his cocoa nut, betel nut, and jack trees, *actually exceeded* (vide statement) *the average gross produce;* and the pepper vines being now also ordered to be taxed, and that too immoderately, the revenue must here have been destructive of itself, for it is impossible that lands so over-

burthened could continue to be cultivated. Neither would it be possible for proprietors to pay such a revenue, unless, by fraud, collusion, or ignorance of the surveyors, they could contrive to keep out of the survey accounts certain portions of their productive lands, to be consequently held free. MALABAR.

We thus see, too, how the system tends to destroy the class of landed proprietors, properly so called, every where, by absorbing the whole of the net rent of land in the amount of the government revenue. It is peculiarly ruinous in its application to Malabar, where families of high antiquity and great respectability must be utterly annihilated, if an assessment of this amount, or any thing approaching to it, could without exception, be rigorously exacted from the whole of their estates.

The preceding remarks have reference to the rate of revenue compared with the gross and net produce of the lands; but I must entreat the reader's particular attention to the proofs clearly deducible from this statement, as to the degree of confidence to be placed in a Tumar Jumma, or a Ryotwar survey. A Tumar Jumma, or Ryotwar survey, even of an extensive country, is professed to be accomplished in a year, eighteen months, or

 from that to four years, and to give the *average* produce of lands of different qualities under good and bad crops. But how is this to be accomplished in a short period? Let the reader notice, in the preceding statement, the extreme fluctuations of gross produce which occurred from year to year, in the several articles enumerated. The produce of *cocoa-nut trees* varied from 65 Rupees in 1815-16 to 495 Rupees in 1821-2. In like manner *betel-nut trees* varied from 5 Rupees in 1821-2 to 93 Rupees in 1820-1; and *jack trees* from 28 Rupees in 1817-18 to 350 Rupees in 1823-4, *with very considerable variations in every other year throughout the whole period.*

From this simple fact, therefore, it is but rational to conclude, without the aid of twenty years' experience in an Indian collectorship, that Tumar Jummas, and Ryotwar surveys, rapidly executed, and unduly checked, cannot be any thing better than mere "conjectural estimates." From this statement ten years would appear to be the shortest period, from which a fair average of produce could be deduced, whereon to fix any thing like a just assessment.*

* Since writing the above, I have perused an interesting Memoir by Mr. Hodgson, delivered to the Royal Asiatic Society, on the agricultural and revenue economy of an Indian

Admitting, however, that the necessary time was given to accomplish the survey, it would still require a knowledge of the actual produce

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village called Pudu-Vayal in the Jaghire. To this memoir is annexed a table shewing the extent of cultivation and gross produce of the land, the government share and value in money, together with the net profits thereon from the year 1784 to 1813 inclusive, or thirty years, taken from the village register or Curnum's accounts. This table professes to exhibit an accurate account of the fluctuations in the extent of annual cultivation, produce, and price of grain — and in this respect fully confirms the inferences drawn from the table in the text. The village had been granted in 1785 to an individual for services performed on condition of his paying a certain reserved annual sum as revenue to government. The extent of cultivation in each year depended on the quantity of water that could be supplied from the village reservoir or tank. It appears then that the cultivation varied from 35 Canis (a land measure of 57,600 square feet) in one year to 382 Canis in another; — that the gross produce in grain varied from 180 measures in one year to 1731 measures in another; that the gross produce bore no fixed proportion to the number of Canis cultivated, but varied with the seasons and supply of water; and that the net amount of the grantee's profit varied from 627 Pagodas in one year to 63 and 45 Pagodas in others, but converted in another into a dead loss of 167 Pagodas, with various intermediate fluctuations. It is very satisfactory to have one's own conclusions thus confirmed by a separate set of facts, of such unquestionable authenticity as every thing must be proceeding from the pen of so distinguished and experienced a public servant as Mr. Hodgson. Both tables go to prove the futility of Ryotwar surveys pre-

MALABAR. of lands which *none but proprietors and cultivators can possess;* and as every proprietor and cultivator in the country are opposed to the object of the surveyor, he has no means of attaining an approximation even to accurate knowledge on the subject; and is therefore left to flounder in all the mazes of conjecture. It is no answer to this argument to say that the surveyor can be assisted by Canongoes' accounts, and village registers; for wherever

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tended to be accomplished in 15 or 18 months or even a few years; when 10, 20 or 30 years seem barely sufficient to furnish an average on which to fix a fair or equitable assessment. Or if a just average could be attained, it is only the villagers and their Curnum who could furnish it; and these are of all persons most interested to deceive or to collude with the officers of government.

The only point on which I would differ with Mr. Hodgson is as to "the uninterrupted payment by the cultivator of a "*revenue* in grain from time immemorial, or without doubt "during the last 100 years, the rates of payment remaining "always the same." This *revenue* Mr. Hodgson states to be 57½ per cent. of the gross produce in grain, (first deducting 10 per cent. for charges) leaving 42½ to the Ryot or cultivator. I know of no existing proof of a *revenue* like this having ever been demanded in any part of India by any *ancient* Hindoo government, but abundant evidence of the contrary; —whilst we know that this rate of revenue was exacted throughout the period of the Mussulman administration, and, in the Carnatic in particular, with all the rigour and severity peculiar to a Mussulman system of taxation.

these have been examined by intelligent European collectors, they have invariably been found to be mere fabrications. MALABAR.

SECTION XVIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

I have thus given a concise analysis of the principal land revenue systems which have been carried into effect, or which still are in force, in the Company's Indian territories. Of all these, the great vice is the enormity of the government portion, or tax, and the impracticable attempt to regulate it as a fixed portion of the gross produce of the soil; causes which have invariably tended, by a natural progression, to extortion on the one hand, and to poverty and moral debasement on the other. The power of government to realize its own share is irresistible. The corrupt influence of the native collectors, and of persons interposed between collectors and Ryots, is also incapable of effectual control. Violence, corruption, and artifice on the one hand, are met by deceit, hypocrisy, and cunning on the other. What the one tries to extort, the other endeavours to withhold. An universal degradation

Concluding Remarks.

of character ensues. The basest principles of action are substituted for honesty and truth; and this contest for lucre, lying between power and weakness, terminates at length in reducing helpless Ryots to a *worse condition* than that of common labourers hired at two Annas, or threepence per diem.*

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* The following statement is extracted from Mr. Colebrooke's Treatise on the Husbandry of Bengal, to show the average gain of a Ryot from agriculture in the lower provinces:—

(16 Annas=1 Seer. 40 Seers=1 Maund.)

"Ten Maunds of rice are a large produce from one Bigha, "and a return of fifteen for one.

	M.	S.	A.	M.	S.	A.
"Cultivator's share.				5	0	0
"Seed which the proprietor of the land "had advanced, and which is re- "paid to him with 100 per cent. by "way of interest	0	26	10½			
"Labour of reaping ditto, at the rate "of a sixth of the whole crop	1	26	10½			
"Ditto weeding, 20 days, at 2½ seer	1	10	0			
				3	23	5
				1	16	11
"Ditto husking, with the wastage at 3-8ths				0	21	4
				0	35	7

"Thirty-five Seers and seven-sixteenths of clean rice, at the "average rate of twelve Annas for the Maund, are worth eleven

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Of the Zemindary settlement it may be observed, that the advantages proposed by its introduction were, as briefly stated in the Court of Directors' letter of the 1st February, 1811,* to "confer on the different orders of "the community a security of property which

"Annas (eleven-sixteenths of a Rupee) nearly; and this does "not pay the labour of ploughing, at two Annas per diem, for "eight days. It appears, then, that the peasant, cultivating "for half produce, is not so well rewarded for his toil as hired "labourers; and it must be further noticed that he is under "the necessity of anticipating his crop for seed and subsistence, "and of borrowing for both, as well as for his cattle, and for "the implements of husbandry, at the usurious advance of a "quarter, if the loan be repaid at the succeeding harvest, and "of half, if repaid later. We cannot, then, wonder at the "scenes of distress which this class of cultivators exhibits, nor "that they are often compelled, by accumulating debts, to "emigrate from province to province."—Husbandry of Bengal, p. 101.

It may be added, that the above is a statement of produce considerably exceeding the average produce of lands in Bengal. It appears, from details given by the same author, that the average produce of corn husbandry would yield the Ryot no profit, unless his family could do all the labour for which he is above calculated to pay; that his maintenance often depends on the profits derived from other sources, such as milch-kine and orchards of fruit-trees; and that corn is only cultivated to make sure of food for the year, in the event of other means failing.

* Vide Selections from India Records, Vol. I. p. 3.

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Zemindary settlement.

" they never before enjoyed; to protect the " landholders from arbitrary and oppressive " demands on the part of government; to re- " lieve the proprietors of small estates from " the tyranny of the powerful Zemindars; and " to free the whole body of merchants and " manufacturers, and all the lower orders of " the people, from the heavy impositions to " which they have long been subjected."

In these principles every one must applaud the intention of the original projector of the scheme; and it is but justice to the Court of Directors to add, that the whole of their printed correspondence, on this head, indicates an anxious desire to see these principles carried into full effect. Their letters abound with excellent instruction, sound philosophical views, a constant desire to promote the general welfare, and more especially to guard the lower classes against oppression; but the system of land taxation which we had adopted from our predecessors, the amount of that tax, and the machinery by which it was realized, opposed insurmountable obstacles to the accomplishment of the Court's benevolent views.

In the official documents printed of late years, and entitled "Selection of Papers from the Records at the East India House," the practical inconveniences of the Zemindary

settlement are fully detailed, and may be classed under the following heads:— Concluding Remarks.

First. The system was adopted without anything like correct knowledge of the resources of the country. Secondly, it was adopted in equal ignorance of the rights of the different classes of proprietors, or occupants, of the land. Thirdly, a multitude of claims, and disputed titles, arose to be adjusted after the country had been partitioned to Zemindars; and which materially tended to disturb the original arrangement. Fourthly, through the operation of the judicial system, which accompanied the introduction of the Zemindary settlement, the greater part of the original Zemindars were dispossessed of their estates, and reduced to beggary; whilst the forfeiture, sale, and division, of these estates occasioned dilemmas, and confusion, which the Court of Directors, in repeated despatches, acknowledge to have greatly "deranged the "order and disturbed the quiet of society." Fifthly, when, to avoid the continuance of this evil, a power was granted to the Zemindars, to recover by summary process arrears of rent from Ryots, the latter had to endure all the severities and oppressions, from which the system was intended to relieve them. Sixthly, the appropriation of waste and uncultivated Zemindary settlement.

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lands: from which, and the tax on estates being fixed in perpetuity, the Court of Directors have always apprehended inconvenience, lest this limitation, and the irrevocable pledge to maintain it, should deprive government hereafter of the means to meet increased public exigencies. The Court of Directors have also adverted, in their abovementioned letter, to the loss which might accrue from future depreciation in the value of money. This, however, is a contingency, and coupled with considerations, which may more properly be discussed elsewhere.

Of the enumerated objections, and inconveniences, I shall briefly observe that these could not have occurred, had the survey and assessment accounts of villages, and districts, been, what they professed to be, accurate registers of local and personal rights, titles, boundaries, cultivation, and produce of lands. We have here, on the contrary, the plainest proof of their worthlessness. Had these registers been accurate, as they always pretend to be, we should not have had to lament our ignorance of the real value of estates; the consequent monstrous inequality of assessment; or the task (in which, however, we ultimately failed) of adjusting disputed claims, and titles, of which nothing was known pre-

vious to the partition, and declaration of permanency. Concluding Remarks.

Another proof of the inaccuracy of these accounts, may be drawn from the printed statements, of the sales of estates for arrears of revenue. In the Appendix to the Fifth Report, p. 938, we have one of lands ordered to be sold in Bengal, Behar, Orissa, and Benares, during the year 1799-1800; in which it appears that the purchase money of different estates has varied from two to fifty-one years' purchase of the computed Zemindar's share, with a great variety of intermediate rates,* a difference of real value in the respective estates, which could not have occurred, had they been accurately assessed, and rated, in the first instance. But the aggregate amount of the sales of land for arrears of revenue, during the first years of the permanent settlement, is one of the most remarkable features in its history. I know of no official record, in which the sum total is collected from the earliest period, but we may form a fair judgment Zemindary settlement.

* The average of all the sales contained in the above statement is about eight and a half years' purchase of the proprietor's profit or share, reckoned at ten per cent. on the Jumma; in other words, eight and a half years' purchase of the Zemindar's rent.

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of the pressure of this evil, from a statement given by Mr. Stuart, when member of the Supreme Council in Bengal, in which it is stated that in ten years from 1796, lands were sold in Bengal, Behar, Orissa, and Benares, on account of revenue arrears, the assessment on which amounted to 12,175,680 Rupees, being nearly one-half of the whole assessment of the lower provinces; whilst the produce of the sales was only 10,855,537 Rupees. At this time, therefore, the value of the fee simple of these lands was not equal to one year's amount of the assessment, or tax. On another occasion, or, in 1812, we are informed that lands in the districts of Tirhoot, Shahabad, Burdwan, and Nuddea, sold on account of government, did not yield a sufficient sum to discharge the arrears of assessment. On the other hand, the Bengal government report two sales in 1810 and 1811, in which the purchase money was equal to about 2¾ years amount of the annual Jumma; and this is brought forward as "a strong indication of the agricultural prosperity of the country"!!!* Some other instances are given, where the sale price of estates happily bore the proportion of about 4½ to the annual Jumma: but in the "Ceded "and Conquered provinces," (where though

* Vide Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 165. 169—286. 316—335.

the permanent settlement had not been introduced, lands let on-lease were sold for arrears of revenue) we learn by a letter from the Court of Directors to Bengal, 6th January, 1815, "that the arrears on the estates sold in the "ceded provinces exceeded the sale price in "the sum of 10,125 Rupees; and in the con- "quered provinces land seems hardly to be "transferable at any price (owing no doubt to the exorbitant Jumma) most of the estates "sold having been nominally purchased on "account of government." In a subsequent letter, 2nd April, 1817, we have a statement of another sale of lands in the Ceded and Conquered provinces, and in Benares, the Jumma of which was 418,653 Rupees, whilst at the sale they only fetched 277,519 Rupees, or little more than one half of the annual tax. In the Madras territories matters were still worse; for numerous instances are mentioned of lands in Chingleput, Ganjam, Rajamundry, and other districts into which the permanent settlement had been introduced, being brought to sale for arrears of revenue; and actually remaining in the hands of government for want of purchasers.

It also appears that much difficulty arose from an insufficiently defined annexation of waste lands to the estates in Bengal; and an

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imperfect knowledge of their extent and boundaries; for, in a letter from the Court of Directors to Bengal, as late as 28th October, 1818;* and a minute of Mr. Dowdeswell therein referred to, large tracts of waste are stated to exist, which never were appropriated; and which government, in virtue of its alleged sovereign proprietary right, hesitate not to claim as their own. The Court of Directors, however, with a considerate regard to justice, and the faith of existing engagements, express themselves on this head, as follows:— "We are persuaded, that under judicious "arrangements a very considerable accession "of revenue may be derived from the lands "in question, not only without injury, but "without giving just cause of complaint to "any class of individuals;" but they enjoin at the same time that "the utmost degree of "care be taken to prevent any apprehension "of a design, on the part of government, to "infringe the conditions of a compact, to the "maintenance of which our faith is irrevocably pledged."

To many writers on the permanent settlement, it has appeared to be a weighty objection, that by fixing for ever the revenue de-

* Vide Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 166.

mandable from each Zemindary, government has precluded itself from just participation in the produce of the wastes of each estate, that might thereafter be cultivated; and that as the boundaries of these wastes were undefined, the loss which might accrue from this oversight was altogether incalculable. It has also been stated, that government has incurred immense losses, from allowing claims to rent-free lands, which originated in the abuses and disorders of the old government; and which were in no respect sanctioned by the established laws and usages of our predecessors. The loss on this account, in the three lower Bengal provinces alone, is estimated at £1,256,391 sterling per annum, calculating the Jumma of the lands so exempted at 1½ Rupees per Beegah.* The

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* Observations on Law and Constitution of India, p. 142. In the Ceded and Conquered provinces, one-fourth of the arable land is supposed to have been uncultivated when they came into our possession; and the revenue which it was estimated these lands were capable of yielding was £1,236,173, all of which, it was said, would have been lost to government, had the permanent settlement been introduced into those provinces at the time it was so strongly urged by the Bengal government.

These computations, like most others appertaining to revenue accounts, must be taken as mere "estimates." In a minute by Lord Moira, 21st September, 1815, on the subject of the Bengal revenues, a more authentic account is given of the

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Court of Directors have also at various times expressed, in strong terms, the same apprehensions and regrets at this bar to the progressive increase of land revenue; and it must be confessed they are natural enough to those

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Beegah rates in common use in the different collectorships through which he passed. From the data furnished to Lord Moira, I should doubt whether 1½ Rupees per Beegah ought to be considered a fair average; but the conclusions drawn by his Lordship from the varying rates of different districts are still more important. In some districts (he observes) the assessment averaged seven and eight Annas per Beegah, in others 1 Rupee 12 Annas; and he adds that the fluctuation of rate per Beegah between individual contiguous estates is yet greater. This very great variation (his Lordship continues) "is the more extra-"ordinary, as it is not to be traced to any difference of fertility "in the respective districts, nor generally to any difference in "the dimensions of the Beegah; besides that there is no reason "to believe that the high or low rate of assessment has any "operation in producing an accumulation of arrears, or pro-"moting the facility of realization."

"The only inference, therefore, deducible from this variety "of rate is, that the Rukbas, or *statements of the Canongoes* "*and Putwarries, from which the record of the extent is* "*formed, are manifestly erroneous;* and that if a proprietor "can venture to engage for so high a rate per Beegah as the "records exhibit, it is only from the knowledge *that he has* "*other lands unknown to the assessor, from the proceeds of* "*which, united with those recorded, he has the means of* "*raising the amount of Jumma,*" &c.—Bengal Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 408.

who limit their views of the sources of revenue in India to the produce of land; and who look to other sources of taxation, particularly luxuries, as quite hopeless, among a people so unalterably poor. But in estimating the weight of this argument, we must not forget, that the natives of India are just as desirous of accumulating wealth, as skilful in the means of acquiring it, and as prone to all its enjoyments, as any people on earth; that it is this very land tax, so coveted and cherished, that confirms their unalterable poverty; that if the channels of wealth were freely opened in India, luxuries would abound as in other countries. It is inconsistent with the laws of human nature to suppose otherwise. The other argument, which generally accompanies these lamentations, will be found on examination to be equally unfounded in the principles of human nature. It is asserted that the existing land tax is, of all others, to be preferred for India; because the inhabitants have been so long accustomed to it; and the proof of this preference is their invincible reluctance, and even opposition, to the payment of any other tax, however gently imposed on them. The land tax of India, with the exactions of its rapacious collectors, may doubtless boast its hoary antiquity; but it is the very

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utmost the wretched inhabitants are enabled to pay. Flesh and blood can yield no more. We cannot therefore be surprised at their excessive aversion to "even a petty tax otherwise laid on." Relieve them, however, of the cruel exactions to which they are now exposed. Allow them to accumulate wealth, and to spend it, as they then would assuredly do, on the luxuries of life; and there can be no earthly reason why native Indians should object to a moderate and sound-principled system of taxation, that was to relieve them from heavier oppression; unless indeed it can be proved that weighty burthens are more bearable than light ones; or that slavery and privations are the ingredients of life best suited to the tastes and appetites of man.

That grave errors and oversights marked the first introduction of this system, is unequivocally admitted throughout the whole of the official documents here referred to. The intention of the Zemindary settlement was undoubtedly good; and the principle of establishing a respectable and wealthy class of land owners throughout the country was worthy of Lord Cornwallis's humanity, and of the Court of Directors' enlightened support; but the enormity of the government tax, which could not be dispensed with, the

evils arising out of the very nature of that tax, and the complicated machinery employed to collect it, were sufficient to defeat the best intentions. The result is now known from printed official records; whilst of the Ryots, the chief object of the Court of Directors' solicitude, we have the same authority for asserting that their condition remains unchanged.

When the Ryots were guarded by the Zillah courts against summary process on the part of the Zemindars to recover rents, disputed demands, and vague tenures, gave rise to endless confusion, artifice, and chicane;* so that rents were regulated by no better rule than the power of one party to withhold, and the other to exact. And when in 1799, a summary power of collecting rents was resorted to, the Zemindars reverted, with little ceremony, to their former practices of flogging, imprisonment, and torture, together with vexatious and oppressive distraints, to recover rents, and often for the purposes of extortion. The Court of Directors, in their letter to Bengal of the 15th January, 1819, declare that they had not formed an adequate idea of the state of things in this respect,

* Husbandry of Bengal, p. 60—63. and Selection of Papers, Vol. I. p. 209—277.

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till they had perused the correspondence on record between the judicial functionaries and the court of Sudder Adawlut, and between the Board of Revenue and the collectors of districts, and other documents; from all which they observe, "the truth is unequivo- "cally confirmed of the absolute subjection "of the cultivators of the soil to the discre- "tion of the Zemindars; while they exhibit "to us a view of things with reference to the "landed tenures and rights of that valuable "body of the people (Ryots) which satisfies "us that decisive measures for remedying "evils of such magnitude must be undertaken "without delay."* Adding, in another paragraph, "it too often happens that the quantum "of rent which they (Ryots) pay is regulated "neither by specific engagements, nor by the "established rates of the Pergunnahs, or "other local divisions, in which they reside, "but by the arbitrary will of the Zemindars."

We thus see how Zemindars, restricted by law to one-eleventh of the net rent of their "landed estates," think it quite right to help themselves to more, where they can, in spite of law. It is therefore to be apprehended that, as long as our exorbitant tax continues, an adjustment of rents on equitable terms may be impracticable; whence a system in-

* Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 353, 4.

tended for good, and of which the abstract principle is not to be disputed, has hitherto, at least, from the cause above assigned, been a mere mockery of the term in its practical operation. Courts of justice even could afford no remedy for the evils thus subsisting. In the cases which did come before them, there was neither rule, nor precedent, nor usage to guide their decisions; for the rights of Ryots had never been defined; and judgments consequently were often given on principles diametrically opposite. In the forcible language, therefore, of the Honourable Court (January, 1819), we are left to "lament that "the objects of the permanent settlement, in "as far as regards the security and happi- "ness of the most numerous and industrious "class of the community, have hitherto been "so imperfectly attained, that instead of "maintaining their rights, we have not even "ascertained what they are."*

But another grievous omission was committed on the first introduction of the permanent settlement. The rights of the Ryots generally were then thought to be sufficiently protected by the Pottah regulations. No others were attended to, save the supposed right of the Zemindars and Talookdars, with

* Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 357.

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whom the settlements were made. But it has since appeared that a numerous class of persons exist, variously denominated in official documents, village Zemindars, cultivating Zemindars, Mofussil Zemindars, village proprietors, whom the Court of Directors, from the evidence adduced, pronounce to be "the real "proprietors of the land in their respective "occupations,"* and for whose security and benefit some legislative provision should still be made, if it could be done without exciting alarm of its being intended to undermine or overthrow the principles of the permanent settlement itself.

In a very able minute by Lord Moira on the revenue administration in Bengal, (21st September, 1815;)† these persons are noticed in the following terms: "Within the circle of "the perpetual settlement, the *situation of* "*this unfortunate class is yet more desperate,* "*and though their cries for redress may have* "*been stifled in many districts, by their per-* "*ceiving that uniform indisposition to attempt* "*relieving them, which results from the diffi-* "*culty of the operation, their sufferings have* "*not on that account been the less acute.* In "Burdwan, in Behar, in Cawnpore, and in- "deed wherever there may have existed ex- "tensive landed property at the mercy of

* Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 362. † Ibid. 403.

" individuals, (whether in farm, or Jaghire, in " Talook, or in Zemindary) of the higher class, " *complaints of the village Zemindars have* " *crowded in upon me without number*, and I " had only the mortification of finding that " the existing system established by the " legislature, left me without the means of " pointing out to the complainants any mode " in which they might hope to obtain redress. " In all these tenures, from what I could " observe, the class of village proprietors " appeared to be in a train of annihilation, " and unless a remedy is speedily applied, " the class will be soon extinct. Indeed, I " fear, that any remedy that could be pro- " posed would, even now, come too late to be " of any effect in the estates of Bengal, *for* " *the licence of* 20 *years, which has been left to* " *the Zemindars of that province, will have* " *given them the power, and they have never* " *wanted the inclination, to extinguish the* " *rights of this class, so that no remnants of* " *them will be soon discoverable.**

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* In like manner, the Commissioners of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, speaking of these persons, remark, " the " whole of this valuable class of landholders may be considered " to be extinct in the lower provinces (Bengal, &c.) in conse- " quence (they add) of the interpretation put on the title of " general Zemindar, who was considered by the terms of the " permanent settlement as the universal proprietor of the soil,

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"It is well known, (and even if it were "questionable, the practice of the provinces "which have lately fallen under our domi- "nion, would set the doubt at rest,) that the "*cultivating Zemindars were by a custom more* "*ancient than all law, entitled to a certain share* "*of the produce of these lands;* and the rest, "whether collected by Pergunnah Zemindars, "or by the officers of government, was collect- "ed as the share of the Circar" (government).

The village Zemindars, or village proprietors, are of the same description as the persons denominated Maliks by the collector of Shahabad, (*p.* **366**, *&c.*), and from the account given of these proprietors in sundry official documents, I can have no doubt that landed property formerly existed in the north of India in as perfect a state, as will be described in the 2d chapter of landed tenures in the south; and that Maliks and village Zemindars, (to say nothing of other Ryots,) were actual proprietors of estates, reduced by Mussulman exactions to become cultivators of their own lands, which they and their descendants, from strong attachment to their ancient patrimony, could never persuade themselves to abandon. These rights, by far

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"and the fountain from which alone any other person could "derive a property."—Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 361. 371.

the most important of any, were wholly neglected in the arrangements for the permanent settlement; and for this oversight, as Lord Hastings observes, it may now be very difficult to propose a remedy.

Of the village Zemindars it may be added, that they seem chiefly to have been brought under the notice of the Bengal servants, after our acquisition of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, where they were found to exist in great numbers, but ousted and neglected; and where from just attention to their rights on the part of our collectors, and the Board of Commissioners, they have been since restored to their properties, to the exclusion of farmers, and Tehsildary contractors, with whom the first settlements in that country were made.

Another description of landed proprietors was also discovered in these provinces, called Putteedars. These are *joint* proprietors of villages or estates, with equally indisputable rights to this their *common* or *partnership* property; and which will be more fully explained, and discussed, in the second chapter.

But the entire neglect of this class of the native inhabitants on the introduction of the permanent settlement, is the more to be regretted, as whatever may have been our want of information regarding them in Bengal pro-

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per, it is clear, that on settling the province of Benares, the situation of both village Zemindars and Putteedars might have been distinctly traced. They were found to exist in great numbers in Benares, with a right of property in the lands they occupied, very different from that which was supposed to attach to the persons called Zemindars in Bengal; a right which it is admitted they could dispose of by sale or gift to others, and which consequently embarrassed the Resident in his arrangement of the permanent settlement with the greater Zemindars; "many points in "the code of regulations scarcely reconcile- "able with such a tenure being left to be re- "ferred to ancient local usages, and the re- "cords of the Canongoe's office."* The only reason that can be conceived for thus overlooking the rights of this most important class of the native community, is the prevailing notion at this time (1793 and 1795,) of the Company's sovereign proprietary right to all the lands of their dominions; whence these real proprietors were considered as nothing better than Mocuddums or Potails of villages; and as such handed over without further consideration, to the superior Zemindars, with whom the permanent settlement was effected.

* Fifth Rep. p. 47. and Reg. II. of 1795.

The advocates of this system have already contended, and will no doubt repeat the argument, that the Zemindary settlement, at least, in Bengal, has produced the most beneficial effects; and that the proof of it lies—first, in the more certain and regular realization of the revenue—and next, in the increased cultivation and wealth of the provinces. That these results may be experienced of late years in Bengal, I mean not to deny; but I cannot in any respect ascribe them to the permanent settlement: the operation of which hitherto has been one continued series of almost unmixed evil. The advocates of the Zemindary settlement will not pretend that it has restored the beggared Zemindars of 1790, &c. to their estates; or that their original dispossession was an act either of mercy to them, or creditable to the justice of the British government. Although the revenue be now more regularly and certainly collected, the advocates cannot deny the load of proofs contained in the printed papers at the India House of the excesses committed by Zemindars, commissioners of distraint, and others* to accomplish it; and which has occasioned an acute and intelligent observer to describe the system, as transferring the miserable Ryots, "like so

* Vide Selection of Papers, &c. Vol. I. p. 209—277.

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"many herds of cattle into the hands and "bondage of a class of persons proverbial "throughout India as oppressors and extor- "tioners; I mean the Zemindars."* Neither can they deny the worst of all its reproaches, the enormous amount of the land tax—upwards of fifty per cent. of the gross produce of the soil—the grand source of oppres-

* Observations on the Law and Constitution of India, p. 163, published in 1825. The same author adds from personal observation of the condition of Ryots in Bengal—"The "abject slavery of the cultivating classes could only spring "from the necessity of absolute submission; submission not "to the revered representative of an ancient family, but to the "upstart of the hour, the Bengal Baboo, the new Malik, the "the absolute lord of the soil, who has no feelings in common "with the people, whom he fancied he had purchased with his "estate; whose knowledge of the regulations told him he "could, not only without violation, but with all due conformity "to the words (not indeed to the intent) of them, destroy the "happiness of his slave for ever, by banishing him from the "village of his birth, the companions of his youth, the associ- "ates of his manhood, the support of his old age. Those "ephemeral lords of English creation were not indeed vested "with the power of life and death, not with the power of tor- "menting the body, but the happiness of the people was placed "entirely at their mercy, and their minds were subdued. In- "stead of the manly spirit of former times, which a very small "portion of independence will nourish, the native of Bengal "knows now (1825) that even the privilege of residing in his "native village he owes to his subjection alone."—Obs. &c. p. 205.

sion and confusion, and to which every thing was sacrificed; nor the entire neglect, if not violation of the rights and privileges of the minor occupants—the real proprietors—of estates by a hasty transference to others of what belonged not to us to bestow.

As to the symptoms of encreased wealth, and extended cultivation, in the Bengal provinces, it would be quite surprizing were it now otherwise. If we reflect on the vast increase of the external trade of Bengal, since 1813;* and consequently of the natural productions of the country to supply foreign demand, we can be at no loss to account for the improvements, which its advocates insist upon. I am one, who always anticipated these results from the opening of the trade; and if, with the prospects of future benefit to be derived from a still freer commercial intercourse with Britain, we couple the advantages which will accrue to individuals from the possession of untaxed wastes, we may ultimately be led to pardon the difficulties and apprehensions, which the appropriation of these wastes has hitherto occasioned. We may even excuse the inequalities which we now know to have occurred in the original

* *Vide Part I. p.* 70, *et seq.*

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assessment of estates, and rather be led to admire the dispensations of a gracious Providence which can thus, in mercy to erring mortals, extract good out of evil, and cause one of the greatest errors of the settlement at its first introduction to result at length in positive benefit to the community at large, by the augmentation, and diffusion of individual wealth, which without these errors, would not have been realized.

But in the accounts given of increased cultivation, we may reasonably presume that there is some exaggeration, and some mistake, even on the part of resident observers. In the first place some of the collectors represent the cultivation of their districts to be increased one third in the course of a few years. Now, for the sake of illustration, let us suppose this to be generally the case throughout Bengal, and the consequence, as represented, of the introduction of the permanent settlement; and not as I conceive of increased effective demand from the opening of the trade. What would be the result? It is not even pretended that the population has increased in the same ratio, either in wealth, or numbers. The great mass indeed—the Ryots—are uniformly admitted to be in the same state of wretchedness as ever; and effective

demand for produce being consequently stationary, or nearly so, the quantity of produce now represented by three, would be of no more, or little more, exchangeable value than the quantity before represented by two. The only advantage, therefore, would be that a starving Ryot, here and there, might chance to get a little more in quantity to his own share, if there should happen to be also enough to satisfy the rapacity of his Zemindar.

But in Bengal of late years, and in the Ceded and Conquered provinces, vast tracts of land have been discovered to be secretly held by individuals, of which nothing was known at the formation of the permanent settlement. These, in late reports, are called Toufer, or Towfeer, meaning increase or excess, that is, lands held and cultivated by individuals unknown to the assessors, or fraudulently excluded from the Canongoes' and Putwaries' registers. In the before quoted minute of Lord Moira on the revenue administration in Bengal, 21st September, 1815,* there is a circumstantial account of these Toufer, or Towfeer, lands, the extent of which, he says, is incalculable; extensive tracts being daily discover-

* Vide Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 166.

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ed, even to whole villages, unknown to, or omitted from, the village records. Lord Moira, therefore, does not consider the supposed improvement in Bengal to be at all dependant on the permanency of our settlements, but to have arisen as much from the discovery of Toufer land, as from wastes since cultivated.

It is moreover known from various authorities on this subject, that great disappointment (a common and natural result every where) has been experienced in Bengal from the cultivation of wastes; the produce has in many instances not compensated for the expence of clearing these lands; and great losses have been sustained. The advantages and disadvantages of these attempts may, therefore, as regards the people generally, be thought to balance each other. At the same time many of the Zemindars are admitted to be wealthy. This may be accounted for, in some degree at least, by the easy rate at which their estates were originally purchased; by a successful cultivation of wastes; or by the discovery, and subsequent derivation of rent, from Towfeer lands, altogether unknown to the public records at the time of fixing the permanent assessment.

All this may be, and is, admitted; but it is at the same time clearly proved, in several

authentic documents now in print, that much of the wealth of these new proprietors has been drained from the unhappy Ryots by the most extortionate exactions;* and which an European collector, whose means of vigilance and superintendence are altogether unequal to the extent of his jurisdiction, neither can, nor ever will be able, even with the aid of courts of justice, effectually to controul.

As to the facility and regularity with which the revenues are alleged to be collected under the permanent settlement, whatever may be the case now, it must be recollected that this has not been so throughout the period. The present race of Zemindars may very probably sit on their estates more easy than their predecessors. Their incomes from the causes above assigned being greatly improved, their means of discharging a fixed Jumma became proportionably increased. But for the first ten or fifteen years after the introduction of the system, we must not forget that arrears of revenue had accumulated to such a degree as to occasion the sale of one half of the lands of the lower provinces to provide for their discharge, (*vide p.* **365** *and* **561**). We have ano-

* In Mr. Shore's time (1789) Zemindars were admitted to be "universally poor." Vide 5th Report, App. p. 182.

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ther official document in the 5th Report (Appendix, p. 938.) in which it appears that in the year 1799 alone, that is, ten years after the introduction of the decennial settlement, lands were sold in every province, the Jumma of which amounted to 777,967 rupees, and only fetched at the sales 654,215 rupees. We have here again the remarkable fact that after ten years' operation of this famed system, land in Bengal was not worth, in public estimation, one year's purchase of the amount of our "moderate assessment."

Lord Cornwallis would, if he could, have imposed a really "moderate Jumma," on these estates in the first instance; in the expectation that any future encreased demands of the state might be supplied from other sources of taxation through the increased wealth of the community. The one is so natural a consequence of the other, that the disappointment of these expectations can only be ascribed to an originally heavy assessment, which the indispensable wants of government required to be levied from the country; and which, instead of guarding the Ryots, as was also intended, against oppression by the Zemindars, made them over *en masse*, to the vexations, and exactions, of hard-hearted task-masters, against which laws and

regulations were altogether impotent. If therefore, through the further removal of commercial restraints at the expiration of the existing charter, a fresh stimulus be given to the cultivation of untaxed wastes, or to the employment of additional capital on lightly taxed, or favourably situated, lands, the Zemindary settlement, in spite of all its original errors and failures, will yet be found to yield advantages which, under either of the other systems, may be looked for in vain; and the Court of Directors will have less cause to regret the limit, which this settlement apparently places on their financial resources, or the loss they are apprehensive of sustaining from the gradual depreciation of money; for, with the encrease of individual wealth, the sources of public supply are obvious; whilst every new tax will be paid in the currency in which it may be rated.

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In respect to the Court's apprehension of injury from the gradual depreciation of money in India, I suspect the subject has not been considered by them, with their usual acute attention to passing events. Contrary to the opinion of Montesquieu, and of other writers on India,—who believed the thing impossible —we have of late years seen large quantities of specie imported *from* India into Europe;

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and if the commercial intercourse between the two countries be in future rendered perfectly free, there can be no earthly reason why gold and silver should be of less value in our eastern possessions than in other parts of the world holding free communication with each other. Notwithstanding the great supplies of specie which have been poured into India, through the medium of European and American commerce, the value of money there, has not undergone a visible change. It has been hitherto absorbed by the thousand channels through which it is distributed into the interior, and to the extremities, of Asia; by the habit of hoarding; and the still more prevalent habit among Asiatics of manufacturing large portions into ornaments, commonly called Joys, for the female part of the community. If then we may judge from the money prices of grain and other commodities, and the wages of labour, which have undergone no change since the establishment of the British government in India, we may conclude that the value of money has throughout this period been equally steady. At all events it need not be doubted, that under a system of free trade its level of value in India will always be maintained with that of every other commercial country.

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Ryotwar settlement.

Of the Ryotwar settlement a summary description is stated to have been given by a member of the government of Madras in 1823; and has been copied into a late work of Mr. Tucker, now a Director of the East India Company, who formerly filled situations in Bengal that gave him an opportunity of practically forming opinions, which the subjoined extract is merely brought forward to corroborate. The extract as given by Mr. Tucker is as follows: "To convey to the "mind of an English reader even a slight "impression of the nature, operation, and re- "sults, of the Ryotwar system of revenue, "connected with the judicial arrangements "of 1816, must be a matter of some difficulty. "Let him, in the first place, imagine the "whole landed interest—that is, all the land- "lords of Great Britain, and even the capital "farmers, at once swept away from off the "face of the earth; let him imagine a cess, or "rent, fixed on every field in the kingdom, "seldom under, generally above, its means "of payment; let him imagine the land so "assessed lotted out to the villagers, accord- "ing to the number of their cattle and "ploughs, to the extent of forty or fifty acres "each. Let him imagine the revenue rated "as above, leviable through the agency of

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"100,000 revenue officers, collected or remitted, at their discretion, according to their idea of the occupant's means of paying, whether from the produce of his land, or his separate property. And in order to encourage every man to act as a spy on his neighbour, and report his means of paying, that he may eventually save himself from extra demand; let him imagine all the cultivators of a village liable at all times to a separate demand, in order to make up for the failure of one or more individuals of their parish. Let him imagine collectors to every county, acting under the orders of a board, on the avowed principle of destroying all competition for labour by a general equalization of assessment; seizing and sending back runaways to each other. And lastly let him imagine the collector the sole magistrate, or justice of the peace of the county, through the medium and instrumentality of whom alone any criminal complaint of personal grievance suffered by the subject can reach the superior courts. Let him imagine, at the same time, every subordinate officer, employed in the collection of the land revenue to be a police officer, vested with the power to fine, confine, put in the stocks, and flog, any inhabitant

" within his range, on any charge, without " oath of the accuser, or sworn recorded evi- " dence in the case. If the reader can bring " his mind to contemplate such a course, he " may then form some judgment of the civil " administration in progress of re-introduction " into the territories under the presidency of " Madras, containing 125,000 square miles, " and a population of twelve millions."

Although this picture may be thought highly coloured, it is not exaggerated. It describes the system, with its powers, such as it really is; and, however well administered it may be in the hands of some extraordinary collector, still its being so peculiarly open to boundless abuse is a sufficient warrant of the evils it will always engender under ordinary management. In a very able minute by the Revenue Board at Madras the Ryotwar system is condemned in no less forcible terms; whilst the reports, even of its advocates, cannot divest it of the character of inquisitorial interference; of great intricacy; of forcing Ryots to cultivate particular lands, and the arbitrary seizure of the persons of those who abscond, whether from misfortune or oppression; of a land tax which avowedly absorbs the whole net produce, without any remissions for ordinary failures and calamities; and of the responsibility of

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good for defaulting Ryots; than all of which nothing can be more fatal to the progress of human prosperity.

The opinions of the Court of Directors in favour of the Ryotwar system, seem to have been mainly influenced by the natural attachment to it of its second father, and patron, the late Sir Thomas Munro; but we are informed by the Madras government, that in 1814 Col. Munro, among the eminent collectors of the establishment, was the only one who retained his former sentiments—the opinions, they add, of Mr. Thackeray, the next ablest and most strenuous advocate of the Ryotwar system, having lately undergone a change. We have seen, in a former part of this treatise, that Mr. Ravenshaw formerly advocated this system in South Arcot. Whether his opinions are changed, or confirmed, does not appear; but it is quite clear that at this time the opinions of the ablest servants on the Madras establishment, including the Revenue Board, were decidedly adverse to its adoption after long and attentive observation of its effects; whilst the Madras Government, in an admirable and luminous review of the systems then under discussion, passed the following judgment on the Ryotwar—a judgment formed and adopted upon long experience, and so ably expressed,

that it would be wrong to withhold it from the present consideration of this important question.

The remarks of the Madras government refer chiefly to Col. Munro's plan for a permanent Ryotwar arrangement*—by far the least objectionable of those submitted by him for adoption—and are as follows:—"The first objec-
" tion to such a system is its impracticability.
" Col. Munro does indeed propose to grant a
" remission generally of 25, and in particular
" cases of 33, per cent. on the survey assess-
" ment; but the exigencies of government put
" such a remission entirely out of the question.
" The success of that, or of any other system,
" would, no doubt, be materially promoted by
" a remission; for it is vain to disguise the
" truth, that the prosperity of the country is
" seriously depressed by the public burthens.
" The assessment is heavier than the country
" can bear without injury. It has hitherto
" been exacted by resorting to all the expe-
" dients within the reach of the revenue offi-
" cers; it cannot be permanently secured,
" unless the proportion which it bears to the
" produce of the country be diminished; and

* *Vide p.* 487.

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" this is the grand effect which it is hoped a " permanent settlement may be so contrived " as to produce without any large remission " of the amount of revenue at present collected. " But beneficial as its effects would certainly " be, the proposed remission is too large to be " made; and we have the testimony of Col. " Munro himself, and of every other authority, " that without it the proposed system could " not be carried into effect.

" The Ryots will not voluntarily engage to " cultivate more land, and pay more rent, as " they were formerly compelled to do, than " suit their convenience and interest. While " they are allowed to enjoy the emancipation " which the administration of equal laws has " conferred upon them, they will enter into no " settlement not involving a considerable re- " mission of the present amount of revenue. " In expressing this opinion we would not be " understood to say, that where the survey as- " sessment has been introduced, it is univer- " sally oppressive, but that it is so in the ag- " gregate; and that the whole amount of it, " or indeed the same amount even as hereto- " fore could not be collected by Ryotwar " management without the same compulsive " means as were formerly employed. Col. " Munro, in his report of the 25th of August,

" 1805, states, that if the Ryots were freed " from every species of restraint, they would " probably throw up one-fourth part of the " land under cultivation, from inability to cul- " tivate it properly. Since the date of that " report, the Ryots have been freed from every " species of restraint, so that under a Ryotwar " system, whether annual or permanent, there " would, according to the judgment formed by " Col. Munro, be a reduction of one-fourth " part of the revenue.

" The case was different as long as the Ryots " were held in bondage by the collector, and " all the energies of government were directed " to the one object of exacting from the country " the largest amount of revenue which it could " afford to pay. The Ryots were then com- " pelled, as Col. Munro's report above referred " to shews, to rent land exceeding by one- " fourth part the extent of what they were ca- " pable of cultivating to their own advantage. " But of the two evils, one or other of which " is essential to the successful re-establish- " ment of the Ryotwar system, it is presumed " that it would be accounted the smaller, that " a large remission of revenue should be made, " rather than that the thraldom from which " the Ryots have been emancipated by the " Courts of Justice should be again exercised

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" over them. If that system must be restored, " the alternative will be between an immedi- " ate, though not a permanent reduction of " revenue, and the use of compulsory means " to collect the present revenue without re- " duction.

" But even if a Ryotwar settlement had " been practicable, without a reduction of re- " venue ill suited to the exigencies of the " government, and without the former system " of complete constraint upon the labour and " locality of the Ryots, still the inquisitorial " interference which it requires the revenue " officers of government to exercise over the " property of the Ryots in the soil, and every " thing relating to the management of their " property, must have rendered it a perpetual " engine of fraud and oppression. It is pro- " posed that the Tehsildar should every year " ascertain what quantity of each Ryot's farm " is actually occupied; that if the Ryot in- " crease or diminish his cultivation, he should " require him to throw up or occupy propor- " tionate quantities of good and of bad land; " and that the distribution of water, of *tuc-

* Tuccavy — advance of money to Ryots for cultivation of their lands, when their own means are wanting.

" cavy, and of occasional remissions of reve-
" nue, and the repair of tanks, wells, &c.,
" should not merely in their general scale,
" but in the most minute particulars, be re-
" gulated under the orders of the collector,
" and of course, in the first instance, by his
" native servants. If the primary object of a
" permanent settlement be to give the people
" the management of their own affairs, from
" the belief that their affairs will be infinitely
" better managed by themselves than by pub-
" lic officers, how little would that object be
" attained under such a system! How entirely
" would all management still remain in those
" hands from which it was meant to transfer
" it. It is singular that under a system pro-
" fessedly designed to protect the rights and
" interests of landed proprietors, they are to
" forfeit all property in any land which through
" general or peculiar calamity, or indolence,
" or mismanagement, they may any year fail
" to cultivate, and their property in it is, on
" every such occurrence, to escheat to the go-
" vernment: assuredly a more violent en-
" croachment on landed property, where it
" really exists, than ever was attempted under
" any other system: but independently of the
" evil of this giving and taking of the land,
" the mode of effecting it leaves the landed

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" proprietor (as he is nevertheless esteemed) " entirely at the mercy of the very superintend- " ants from whose interference it was proposed " to extricate him.

" He is not secure against a fraudulent mea- " surement or estimation of the land he quits, " or the land he occupies: nay, if to escape " from this mode of oppression, he resolves " not to alter his limits, the current business " of agriculture, the means of irrigation, the " distribution of tuccavy, or of an abatement " of rent on account of calamity, all must be " regulated by men who have no interest in " his prosperity, no sympathy with his feel- " ings. Surely it were better that confidence " should be reposed where self-interest affords " a security against its being abused, and that " the people should be left to improve the " country in their own way, without the in- " cumbrance of useless and ill-judged aid from " public officers, and without the dread of " their oppression and rapacity. At any rate, " we own that the Ryotwar system proposed " by Col. Munro seems to us in no respect to " deserve the name of a permanent settle- " ment of the land revenue, but on the con- " trary, to leave land revenue, and landed " property, as unsettled as ever, and the people " liable to all that prying, meddling interfer-

" ence of public officers under which no private " concerns can prosper."

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In the despatches of the Court of Directors to their governments abroad, anxiety is uniformly expressed, lest their right to participate, according to usage, in the annual produce of the lands, should be either limited or infringed. From the commencement of the present century, more especially, it has constituted their main objection to the further extension of the Zemindary settlement. Looking, as they naturally do, to the land revenues of India as the only source whence the public exigencies can be supplied, they have always dreaded a fixed Jumma in perpetuity, as debarring them from the means of increased supply, in the event of future exigencies requiring it. The Ryotwar system has accordingly been preferred, because in fact, no bounds are unalterably affixed to the amount of the land-tax; and because (as they say) it provides for their moderate participation with the proprietors at stated intervals in the growing improvement, or extended cultivation, of the country.

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In one of the ablest of their printed letters, viz. 15th January, 1812, this question is discussed at some length. The principle laid down, but brought forward for discussion

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only, is that " government reserving to itself " the right of raising the assessment on the " land in proportion to the growing wealth of " the proprietors, and its own increasing " wants, would not be found either very ex- " ceptionable in principle, or difficult in prac- " tice." The Court at the same time admit that a tax thus imposed, which should be proportioned to the *annual* produce of the soil, or even vary with every variation of rent, would be fatal to improvement. Their view is to fix an assessment on the lands, according to a general survey, and valuation, for a certain number of years; at the end of which the settlement might be renewed, subject to alterations, or increase, either to regulate inequalities, or to recruit the funds of government, should they be found inadequate to the supply of public exigencies. But what is most remarkable in this letter is, that sundry passages are quoted from the Wealth of Nations, Book V. Chap. II. in support of this mode of taxation. Many persons, acquainted with the principles of Dr. Adam Smith, would as soon expect to see his ashes rise into life, as to find him the supporter of Indian revenue systems. In fact, every line of his celebrated work is at variance with the principles on which our Indian systems are based.

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No plainer proof can be desired, than by comparing them with Dr. Smith's four maxims of taxation, with which the part of the chapter here quoted opens; or with his further position that a variable land-tax, such as here proposed by the Court, is the greatest of all discouragement to the improvement of land. "The landlord (he adds) would certainly be "less disposed to improve, when the sovereign "who contributes nothing to the expense was "to share in the profit of the improvement." The fact, however, is, that Dr. Smith, in the chapter referred to, is not reasoning upon a system wherein the sovereign absorbs the whole rent of land in the shape of a tax, and employs thousands of myrmidons to collect it, who scramble for the remainder of the produce with the actual cultivators; but he is describing a system of taxation analogous to that which prevailed, or may still prevail, among the small landholders in the Venetian territory; where lands let on leases by *proprietors to farmers are taxed at one-tenth of the rent;* whilst some abatement of this one-tenth was granted to proprietors, who cultivated their own estate; and, in this latter case, the rent was valued according to an equitable arbitration of neighbouring farmers and landlords. But one-tenth of a landlord's rent is widely

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different, from 50 to 80 per cent. of the gross produce; and as all the leases were regularly recorded in register offices, with certain checks and penalties against fraudulent entries, the process was sufficiently easy of execution in a small territory like Venice; and had no one point of resemblance with the insurmountable difficulties, and grasping exactions, of a Ryotwar settlement.

Of Ryotwar settlements, indeed, it should always be kept in mind, that in the hands of its ablest advocate and patron, Sir Thomas Munro, and according to his own account of its formation, the result can only be deemed a complete failure.* To minds not biased by

* It is worthy of remark in this place that Colonel Munro derived his knowledge of Ryotwar surveying and assessment from Colonel Read, under whom he served as an assistant, when Colonel Read was appointed, in 1792, to be collector of the Baramahl district. Colonel Read having adopted it in Baramahl, may be considered the father of the system. After several years' experience of its practical operation, he writes of it as follows, in a letter to his assistants, dated 10th April, 1797. "After having laid the whole (a voluminous detail of "theoretical accounts) before the revenue board, I shall con- "fess that the affairs of such an extensive country cannot be "managed in such detail for any length of time. I shall expose "the impolicy and folly of government condescending to sup- "plant, by a parsimonious system, the farmer and the mer- "chant," &c. In a subsequent letter on the same subject,

partiality to names, or to systems, it is almost ludicrous to read the account given of mea-

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12th April, 1798, Colonel Read observes, "The process is no "doubt curious, and a proof of what may be done by the "extraordinary means in the power of India collectors; but "the difficulty of performing it likewise proves the machine "employed in conducting the business of revenue to be too "complicated and unwieldy for the purpose. It always has "been so, and of consequence always getting out of order, "unless when directed by uncommon vigilance and attention. "We have thought we could mend it, and in some respects "succeeded; but in having refined upon the old system, we "have added more wheels, rendered it more complicated, and "of course more unfit for carrying on the various branches of "revenue economy.

"The radical defect in it appears to be our *over-rated* "*assessment*, which augments the public and reduces the "private property in the soil to such a degree as to involve the "necessity of ousting all between government and the culti- "vators, and to make their concerns the object of its attention; "that is the principal source of objection, as it impedes agri- "culture and obstructs the ordinary course of justice.

"The nature of our assessment requires the adapting it to "different descriptions of inhabitants, to particular kinds of "culture, and to certain times of the year. The qualifying it "generally, as I propose, may appear to be easy, but it is "obvious, on reflection, that the doing it properly would often "require *our presence where we cannot be, and a knowledge* "*of facts we can never attain.* Potails and other farmers "can determine the actual value of the land with tolerable "exactness: but *they never will do that for us*, or report the "occupancy of it. Our next dependance is on our own "Muttaseddies (accountants), but, self-interested, they will

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suring, and re-measuring, of assessing, re-assessing, and classifying lands; of watching and inspecting crops; of the time, labour, and enormous expence, of a Ryotwar survey; and to find, after all, the whole so little worthy of trust that the revenue was ultimately settled by estimate; or to use Sir Thomas Munro's own words, according to "what was "THOUGHT to be a fair assessment" in reference to former years' collections.

But if revenue, or Jummas, are ultimately to be fixed by estimate, or the power of "*thought*," it may reasonably be asked, why waste years of time? why expend hundreds of thousands of Pagodas,* in useless prepara-

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"generally either favour the Ryots and cheat government, or, "pretending zeal for the service, impose on both."

"I have brought these matters forward again to your con-"sideration, in case you should have any thing new to offer as "the means of a permanent settlement, and more liberal policy "than the present."—Madras Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 603.

This is a remarkable judgment passed on the Ryotwar system by a public officer of high respectability and talent, who having originally fathered the system, might naturally be supposed to have his partialities awakened in its favour, had he seen in it wherewithal to approve; but with a degree of candour and pure regard for the public welfare seldom manifested on such occasions, unreservedly developes its peculiar failings, after five or six years' personal experience of its effects.

* The survey of the ceded districts alone cost between eighty and ninety thousand Pagodas.

tory steps? "*Thought*," aided by former years' collections, and the "opinions of in- "telligent natives," might surely estimate the Jumma of a district, just as well before, as after, the farce of a tedious, costly, and useless survey. There are, however, those who still contend that, on Sir Thomas Munro's method, the actual resources of a country are, and always may be, precisely ascertained. My answer to this assertion is to be found in the analysis of the system already given, as well as of its worthy progenitor, the Tumar Jumma. Let us at all events not forget that when the new Ryotwar settlement was ordered to be adopted into the Madras territories generally, and Sir Thomas Munro, himself, appointed to superintend its introduction, surveys were again attempted, but ultimately abandoned, on proof of their absolute impracticability. On this occasion, Sir Thomas Munro, in his zeal to establish a favourite system, discovered that the want of a regular survey was no longer an obstruction, as the *village or Curnum's accounts* would furnish the necessary information—accounts which, in his report of the 30th of September, 1802, he had declared, on his own experience and knowledge of them, to be "*always false*." *

* *Vide p.* 476.

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We have also the fiat of that able and experienced body, the Revenue Board at Madras, who pronounce "Ryotwar surveys and settlements to be altogether arbitrary; to have, "in fact, no existence beyond the accounts "of the collector's Cutchery;" and whilst professing to fix an equal and moderate tax on each field, to be in practice and operation an enormous oppression on the country.*

It may, in short, be said of Ryotwar settlements generally, that the principle and essence of the system are to exact from impoverished Ryots the utmost revenue they can possibly pay; to follow up occasional improvements with either immediate or periodical participations, on the part of government; and thus to preclude the possibility of a gradation of ranks growing up between the rulers of a country and its labouring cultivators and artizans, which in other countries has been found so essential to the well-being and permanent prosperity of the social body.

As society in India is now constituted, and must continue to be under the system proposed, it is obvious that the success of a Ryotwar settlement must altogether depend on European superintendance and vigilance;

* *Vide p.* 478.

and it is equally obvious that this superintendance and viligance must be in the inverse ratio of the extent of a collector's district. An European collector of 20,000 to 30,000 square miles of country, cannot be expected to superintend it, in all its extent, with the same efficiency which might, and probably would, be bestowed on a district only one-fourth as large, and thus to secure the confidence and satisfaction of its inhabitants. But it may be said this has been done in the Ceded districts under Sir Thomas Munro—Admitted. The people of India have, for so many ages, been accustomed to the greatest severities and extortions under former rulers, that an European collector of easy access, conciliating manners, mild and forbearing temper, with a vigorous mind and steady habits of business, patiently attentive to the representations and complaints of natives, and equally just to all according to the extent of his powers, may be quite certain of universal popularity in whatever part of India he may chance to be placed. Such a man was Sir Thomas Munro, in whose hands (I speak from personal knowledge of his character) measures of extreme difficulty and complication would succeed, which, with ninety-nine other persons out of an hundred, would be found im-

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practicable. Sir Thomas Munro had, moreover, a number of assistant collectors under him, whose personal superintendance over limited extents of country was of great service in promoting the success of his plan. He also brought the qualities abovementioned to the restoration of a country which, previous to our possession, had been reduced by Mussulman severities to an almost inconceivable state of wretchedness and distraction; and where property had been so completely subverted, and its owners dispersed, that scarcely an individual, I believe, if we except Polygars and professed thieves, came forward to assert an independent claim.

To give effect, therefore, universally, to Ryotwar settlements, we must have

First—Principal collectors like Sir Thomas Munro everywhere.

Secondly—A sufficient number of subordinate collectors to admit of the country being divided into small circles for the personal superintendance of each. This would require a vast addition to the junior branches of the civil service; whose chances of promotion to the higher stations, consequently of return to their native land, would be thereby greatly diminished.

Thirdly—Large native establishments would

likewise be necessary; whose habits, as society is now constituted, it might be as difficult as ever to restrain.

But if these objections could be surmounted, others still remain.

First—It is difficult to conceive how a Ryotwary settlement, on Sir T. Munro's principles, could be introduced into districts occupied by village Zemindars, Maliks, Meerassadars, &c. now admitted to be "actual proprietors of the soil," without flagrant violation of these ancient rights.

Secondly — The table entered in *pages* **306-7,** as the foundation of the Tumar Jumma, is calculated to prove the impossibility of *equally* adjusting an assessment which is to be rated at so much per Beegah. Considering the great varieties of soil, of seasons, of productive powers, of the means of irrigation, fluctuations in price, distance of markets, and changes in the culture of different articles, every assessment founded on a general survey and valuation of lands, particularly in India, must be unequal in the first instance; and the longer it continues the greater will be its inequality. In India, for example, a Ryot cannot adopt the European system of a rotation of crops. His lands might yield him in one year a valuable produce, which from change of seasons,

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fluctuation in the state of demand, or change in the article of culture, might not yield him half as much in the next. A tax, therefore, at so much per field, or per Beegah, must be ruinously oppressive when no remissions are allowed; or if allowed, the remissions would require a vexatious annual scrutiny, which it would be impossible, where millions perhaps were claimants, for the officers of government satisfactorily to accomplish.

Lastly—The tendency of the system to perpetuate the present stationary condition of the people is, of itself, decisive of its true character; fatal to the progress of improvement, and fully justifying the judgment passed on it by the Court of Directors in 1809, (*vide p.* **531-2**) that "it is more suited to an early and simple "state of society than to the condition of India "in modern times, and its true interest under "a fostering and enlightened government— "and that however well calculated to discover "the resources of a country, it is not to be "preferred for constant practice."

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Mouzawar, or village, settlement.

Of the Mouzawar or village Settlement, I shall merely add, that the Revenue Board at Madras, were obviously led to its adoption by a sincere desire to relieve the inhabitants from that wretched poverty, into which former financial systems had plunged them. The Board uniformly represented the government revenue or tax to be equal to 50, 60, or 70 per cent. of the gross produce of the lands. Under the pressure of this impost, they clearly saw that the poverty of the people was immovable; that the accumulation of stock, or capital, was impracticable; and that the improvement of the country, or extension of agriculture, were consequently hopeless. They represented the revenue to be in a state of decline, and to be collected everywhere from year to year, with increasing difficulty. They hoped, however, by fixing "rents" irrevocably on the cultivated lands, that a stimulus would be given to the cultivation of the attached untaxed wastes; and that as the country prospered, fresh sources of taxation would arise to supply augmentations, when required, to the public revenue.

But the Revenue Board at Madras were on this occasion, like Lord Cornwallis with the permanent settlement in Bengal, bound to exhibit a certain aggregate amount of revenue,

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without which they knew that their scheme would be rejected. Their avowed wish was to reduce the government assessment on the lands, from one half to one third of the gross produce; but the public exigencies would not admit of so great, or indeed of any sacrifice. The Board had no alternative, but to fix the assessment on cultivated lands, hoping that by the landholders being exempted from tax on improvements, they might in time secure, by means of their own industry, what government was not in a situation to confer on them as a boon. To provide, therefore, for the expectations of government, and the Court of Directors on this head, and to make sure at the same time of as large a revenue as they could from the cultivated lands, the real resources of which they had no other means of ascertaining, they run up a Russed, or increasing, Jumma throughout the period of the triennial lease, in the hope of attaining in the last year of the lease, what has been often, yet so delusively, termed the "standard assessment" of the lands, that is, the "rack rent" described in *pages* **505** *and* **515** "When all was taken from "the people, that they were able to pay;" and this rack rent, or standard, was then to have been made perpetual, if approved by the Court of Directors. But the progress of the trien-

nial lease disappointed their hopes. The representations of collectors had misled them. The revenue was found to have been generally assessed at too high a rate; and in fixing the decennial settlement, a reduction took place, but still too inconsiderable to realize the object and wishes of the Revenue Board, which were to leave a fair income to the proprietors of estates, so as to render them in time to come a really valuable and readily saleable property, consequently a perfect security at all times for the public revenue.

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Mouzawar, or village, settlement.

The Jumma, therefore, of the decennial settlement must have been to the full as high, if not higher, than that which the Revenue Board had before described as being 50 or 60 per cent. of the gross produce of land; and it is, therefore, not easy to conceive how stock and capital could have accumulated under the one system, which was effectually suppressed, under the same circumstances, in the other.*

* In a minute by the Revenue Board of 26th Nov. 1818, treating of Tritchinopoly, they advert to the decennial lease settlement in the following terms—"The annual balances have "been great under the decennial lease rent. The instances "of renters deriving any profit from the engagements have "been few; the instances in which great loss has been sus-"tained have been numerous. *Many Meerassidars have lost*

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Through the ability and persevering investigations of the Madras servants, the existence of individual proprietary right in the provinces subject to that Presidency, was at this time clearly ascertained. Still, throughout the proceedings of this period, a lurking impression is perceptible of the old prejudice in favour of the Company's sovereign proprietary right. Although Meerassy rights were now universally acknowledged, and even admitted and maintained in sundry despatches from the Court of Directors, still the old Mussulman doctrine of sovereignty, and its attributes, was not wholly eradicated; and under this latent impression it is to be feared that lands were too often transferred to strangers, where Potails and Meerassadars refused to concur in the assessments; and likewise sold for arrears of revenue, without due regard to the rights of parties interested; and to whom the loss of this cherished property was a severer punishment than death itself. The Revenue Board have ex-

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" *their Meerassy land for ever;* a still greater number have " been impoverished in their circumstances, to a degree from " which it may take them a long time to recover. The de- " cennial rent cannot be said to have been voluntarily entered " into; the amount of such engagements is not, therefore, " the amount of the just revenue," &c. Mad. Rev. Sel. Vol. III. p. 519.

plained, it is true, on this head, that when the Meerassadars rejected the terms proposed, and the villages were made over to foreign renters, the latter were only vested with such rights as belonged to government—with none extending to the infringement of Meerassy property;—but we cannot forget that "revenue" was always the main object of every financial scheme; that the renter in such cases would be supported in his operations by the power of the collector—often without regard to right or wrong—on the plea of securing the public revenue; whence it is impossible to conceive that foreign renters would not avail themselves of their official power to injure, or absorb, individual rights. There is, indeed, reason to apprehend that the injury and injustice inflicted on rightful landholders by these premature transfers, and sales, have been carried to as great an extent in the Madras, as in the Bengal, provinces. Disappointment to government, and poverty to Ryots, are not, therefore, the only evils to be ascribed to the over-assessment of our Eastern revenue systems; but a violation of private rights altogether incompatible with the ideas and principles of British justice; and which from the course too hastily pursued, and confirmed, is now perhaps placed beyond the possibility of redress.

Concluding Remarks.

Mouzawar, or village, settlement.

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The East India Company have now had possession of extensive territories in India for upwards of 60 years; during which time the exertions of their governments abroad have been unremitting to regulate the revenue systems in force on sound and equitable principles. Their affairs have been administered by men of distinguished ability, with all the advantages of local experience to guide their researches; and yet their official records attest, that to this hour there is not (I believe) a single district, or collectorship, throughout their immense empire, of the real resources of which they are accurately informed. The Court of Directors may be assured that it is the system itself, which is, and ever will be, irremediably adverse to equitable arrangements. It is so inquisitorial and vexatious in its nature, and all its consequences and effects; so open to innumerable abuses and oppressions; so perfectly incapable of efficient controul by laws or regulations which the usages, and condition, of the natives are so peculiarly calculated to contravene; that, until some change of system, or modification, takes place, the anxiety which the Court have so often, and so earnestly, expressed to promote the prosperity of their Eastern dominions, to guard the Ryots against oppression,

and to protect the rights and interests of all classes connected with the soil, will be but a waste of benevolent feeling. Settlements may be made for a term of years, and collectors be able, upright and vigilant; but as long as the present system continues, the subordinate officers *will* exercise a secret influence and malversations, against which protective or preventive enactments will never give the requisite security. Whatever advantages Government may concede in the Ryots' favor, individual extortioners will be sure to appropriate. If inspections into the concerns of individuals, such as Ryotwar settlements require, be admitted to be troublesome and vexatious, it is no answer to so important an objection to insist on their fitness, because the natives of India have been always accustomed to them; and because the same vexations take place under the permanent settlement. As well might we contend that tyranny is the best form of government, or slavery the happiest state of man, if usage is to be received as a sufficient apology. Where radical vices exist in the political constitution, it is the province of justice, as well as wisdom, to correct them.

Concluding Remarks.

Concluding Remarks.

The Court of Directors may also be assured that they are misled by interested, or erroneous, representations, when taught to believe that their subjects in India are—in the sense intended—a "poor, indolent and ignorant "people," only fit to be tutored, and conducted in leading strings. The natives of India are poor in circumstances, but not in mind. They are indolent from the hopelessness engendered by their wretched condition, not from natural disposition. They are ignorant, because that same condition removes them from the means of useful instruction, not from incapacity. There is, I repeat it, in the character of the natives of India, no natural deficiency; nothing to which the best maxims of government may not be applied with the best effects; no people on earth whose improvement would be more assured, if, for the inquisitorial systems now in force, the Court were to adopt and enforce as the basis of the future administration of the country, what cannot be better described than in their own words, viz. "that to provide the "means of defence and protection is almost "the sole duty of government; and that the "wisest policy of the sovereign, is to allow "his subjects to pursue their own interests

" in their own way, and according to their " own judgment."*

Concluding Remarks.

* No one can peruse the ponderous volumes of India records I have so often referred to, in which many most important letters from the Court of Directors to their governments abroad are contained, without being forcibly struck with the ability of some of these compositions.. They prove the whole of the Indian financial system, its principles, and its effects, to be minutely understood at the India House. But it is also calculated to excite no small wonder that so much ability, and constant desire to promote the good of India as is anxiously, and I believe sincerely, expressed in these letters—coupled with the distinguished talents of many of their servants abroad who had to carry the Court's orders into execution—should only have produced hitherto abortive schemes of improvement; and that every attempt to ameliorate the condition of the great mass of the community has ended in failure and disappointment. For so remarkable an effect there must be some powerful cause; and the only natural explanation that can be given of the phenomenon is, that the union of opposite interests,—of the political and commercial character,—in the same body, is constantly impelling the Court of Directors, and consequently their servants, in different directions. They have two incompatible objects in view; and in proportion as one is prosecuted with intense interest, it abates their means of promoting the other.

It is well known that the East India Company have no active circulating capital for the purposes of their trade. Ever since the acquisition of the Dewanny, they have been regularly supplied with funds for the purchase of their annual investments, both of India and China goods, from their revenue treasuries. This will be fully explained in a subsequent Part. We can only reason on the fact in this place. This trade, and

SECTION XX.

Other heads of revenue.

Besides the land revenue of India, by far the most important, there are other sources

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the various duties and occupations, public and private, connected with it, are the great source of their power and patronage in England; it is therefore no reflection on the present or any past body of Directors to call this a favoured branch of their concerns. As long as the Court of Directors in this country are thus furnished with the means of defraying a vast annual expenditure, without the necessity of attending to profit or loss, and always dreading the close of their trading charter as the termination of their existence, it is only consistent with the feelings of human nature that it should be a peculiar object of their regard. The evil in this case lies not so much with the men, as with the system which the legislature had enacted. Ever since the year 1765 to the present hour (as will be hereafter more fully proved), the orders of the Directors to their governments abroad have been most urgent and imperative to furnish them with investments to the utmost extent of their resources, even to the sending home of goods known to be attended with loss; but as this could not be done without a large revenue, as the debt abroad was also constantly increasing, the dread of defalcation in their Indian funds seems to have been a source to them of frequent agitation and alarm.

In their political capacity they have had also immense expenses to provide for, both at home and abroad. This, too, is another source of patronage and power; and patronage and power are the only advantages of a Director's situation, for the small salary he receives cannot be an object of consideration

whence government derives no inconsiderable supplies. These are— Other heads of revenue.

First, the customs, mint, post-office, stamp duties, judicial fees and fines, and pilotage, &c. Of these the customs alone are important. They are stated, in the latest accounts presented to parliament, to yield for the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and

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to men of independent fortunes. But here again large revenues are indispensable. What the Court of Directors thus anxiously covet, it is but natural for their servants abroad to follow up with correspondent diligence, as the surest road to preferment and favour. Increase of revenue, always misnamed "improve-" ment," is therefore a constant object of universal pursuit. A general persuasion at the same time prevailing, however erroneous, that there are no other means of deriving a large revenue from India than by draining it out of the gross produce of land; that the system we have adopted is as old as existence; that however ill suited to all the rest of mankind, it is still the best possible system for such an anomalous race as native Indians; time, labour, zeal, distinguished talent, and the purest benevolence, have all been equally wasted in vain attempts to methodize, and reduce to just principles, what is utterly incapable of any other result than discomfiture and disgrace—excessive poverty to the payers of the tax, and excessive rigour and oppression in the measures necessary to realize it—and which drew forth those memorable remarks of the Court of Directors (*vide pp.* **293** *and* **583**), when they affirmed that our Indian administration had been a degrading struggle throughout the country for rents and taxes; and that so far from being able to maintain the rights of the Ryots, we did not even know what they were.

Other heads of revenue.

Bombay, about one and a half million sterling; but by far the greater part of this sum is received for customs in the interior provinces, and being therefore paid by native consumers, nine-tenths, or perhaps ninety-nine hundredths, of whom are of the agricultural class, is in fact a *pro tanto* addition to the land tax. The receipts from the other heads are comparatively trifling in amount; whilst the stamp-duties and judicial fees and fines are complained of as vexatious in practice. But,

Secondly, there are other heads of revenue which cannot be so lightly passed over, and these are the salt, opium, and liquor monopolies.

SALT.

Of the salt monopoly I shall not repeat here all the severities, and excesses, with which it is charged. In my former publication (Speeches, p. 114) a letter is given relative to the salt manufacture, which may be referred to for details, by a gentleman, from ocular observation of occurrences on the spot. Though not an official document, it is authentic. In this place, however, I propose to confine myself to what may be found in public records, and writers of authority; whence it

appears that in Bengal, salt is only allowed to be manufactured within a limited spot (to prevent smuggling) in the Sunderbunds.* The Zemindars, on whose estates the manufacture takes place, are allowed a compensation for the land so appropriated, but not allowed to manufacture the article for their own benefit. Neither can salt be imported from other places, except under " permits " from government, requiring its delivery into the public stores at a fixed price. It is in fact a strict monopoly. The people employed in the manufacture are called Molungees.

Other heads of revenue.

After the Company had established a factory in Bengal, a Firmaun was obtained from the Moghul emperor, whereby the Company's trade, in " whatever goods and merchandize " their agents might bring or carry, by land " or by water, in the ports, quarters and bor- " ders of the provinces," was wholly exempted from the payment of duties.

This privilege, at first confined to exports and imports, was confirmed in treaties with successive Subahdars, by which all goods of whatever description bought or sold by the Company's servants, or their Gomastahs

* A district included within the Delta of the Ganges.

Other heads of revenue.

(agents) were allowed to pass free. It was also stipulated that favour and encouragement should be shewn to Gomastahs having a Perwaneh or Dustuck (permit, passport, or warrant under seal) signed by the Governor, or by any of the chiefs of the English factories.

At this time it seems that the Company's servants, from the members of government downwards, chiefly depended on the profits arising out of this privileged trade for remuneration of their public services, in which salt was always the principal article.

This exemption from duties naturally threw the whole private trade of the country into the hands of the Company's servants and their Gomastahs; and under cover of Dustucks or Perwanehs, which came at last to be issued by any body assuming English authority, even by private merchants out of the service, the greatest enormities appear in the public records of the period* to have been committed;

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* Verelst's View of Bengal, Chap. I. II. and IV. and Appendix. In Chapter IV., Mr. Verelst expresses himself on this head as follows:—"It appeared that an exemption from "duties had thrown the whole trade of the country into the "hands of the English. The country government was de- "stroyed by the violence of their agents; and individual "tyranny succeeded to national arrangement. In the general "confusion, all who were disposed to plunder assumed the

not only in the way of trade, but against Zemindars, Talookdars, Ryots, and others connected with the public revenue. Even the revolutions which occurred in Bengal from 1756 to 1765, the capture of Calcutta by Serage ul Dowlah, with the miseries of the black hole; his deposition; the elevation of Meer Jaffier in 1757; his deposition in 1760; the cruelties and murders of English agents and dependants by his successor Meer Cossim; the war which ended in his deposition, and the restoration of Meer Jaffier in 1764, were all very much connected with the iniquitous practices and excesses of these traders, and their Gomastahs. To such a pitch had these abuses been carried, that the Court of Directors, in their letters to Bengal in 1764 and 1765, (Verelst's Appendix, p. 127, 128) condemn the conduct of their servants in the most unqualified terms. They say "that an unbounded

Other heads of revenue.

"authority of our name, usurped the seats of justice, and "carried on what they called a trade by violence and oppres- "sion. The Nabob's officers either fled before them, or, "joining the invader, divided the spoil. The barrier of the "country government once broken down, it became impossible "to stop the inundation. Mahomedans, Portuguese, and "Armenians alike, nay, every illiterate mariner who could "escape from a ship, erected our flag, and acted as lord of the "district around him."

Other heads of revenue.

" thirst after riches seems to have possessed the " whole body of our servants, to that degree " that they have lost all sight of justice to the " country government, and of their duty to the " Company;" and they look to the then expected arrival of Lord Clive and the Select Committee in Calcutta " to remedy these evils " —to restore (as they add) our reputation " among the country powers, and convince " them of our abhorrence of such oppression " and rapaciousness."

In these letters, this trade is denominated the "inland trade in salt, betel nut, and to- " bacco;" and avowedly carried on, free of duties, for the benefit of the Company's servants. Salt, however, was always the principal article. But the Court of Directors peremptorily ordered the whole trade to be discontinued, and a formal renunciation of this right to be transmitted to the Nabob, in consequence of a clause conceding it being inserted in the treaty with him of 1763,* which the Court of Directors highly disapproved, and

* The article here alluded to is the third of the treaty with Meer Jaffier, 10th July, 1763; an exception is made in regard to salt, the principal article in this inland trade, and which was subjected to the trifling duty of 2½ per cent. on the Hoogley price.

directed that part of the treaty to be annulled. They also required private privileged merchants, with their agents, to be recalled to the Presidency; and positively forbad their residence, in future, in the interior. Other heads of revenue.

In 1765, Lord Clive's government conceived themselves instructed by the Court of Directors to regulate this trade in such a way as should admit of its being carried on for the benefit of the Company's servants; but under such restrictions as should prevent the recurrence of abuse.

All private agents were accordingly recalled from the interior. A society was formed for the exclusive purchase, and sale, of salt, &c. at certain specified markets; their affairs to be managed by a committee, and the shares of the society being distributed among the Company's servants according to their respective rank.

The selling price of salt was fixed, at the authorized markets, at 15 per cent below the average price of twenty preceding years.

A duty equal to 35 per cent was at the same time fixed on salt for the benefit of the Company; which in 1765 amounted to £120,000,* and for which the Committee of the society were held answerable.

* Verelst's View of Bengal, p. 114.

Other heads of revenue.

In 1766 this plan was modified on the suggestions of Lord Clive; and it was then resolved that salt should only be sold by the society at Calcutta, and at a price not exceeding 2 Rupees per Maund.* The retail of the commodity throughout the interior was now wholly left to native merchants; those of Calcutta being only allowed to purchase certain quantities, and the prices, as before, fixed at all the authorized inland markets, subject to a heavy penalty if these rates should ever be exceeded by the native dealers.

The duty payable to the Company was now raised to £50 per cent; so that the revenue from this head for 1766 is stated at £160,000, or about thirteen lacs of Rupees.†

The Court of Directors, however, disapproved of the plan of the society; so that it was finally abolished on the 1st of September, 1767, with one year's grace to enable the society to wind up their concerns. In lieu of the profits on this trade, a commission of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the revenues, amounting to £63,000 per annum, was distributed among the servants; but, as Mr. Verelst observes,

* A Bazar Maund=82 lbs. Av.

† Lord Clive's Minute, 3d September, 1766. Verelst's Appendix, p. 251.

" when the general restraints of inland trade " was no longer supported by the private in- " terest and authority of the council, Europe- " ans largely engaged under the names of their " black agents, and the profits of this com- " merce were added to the public allowance."

Other heads of revenue.

We learn further from Mr. Verelst, that previous to the establishment of the society, or from 1760 to 1765, the price of salt in Calcutta was 100 Arcot Rupees, to 170 Rupees per 100 Maunds. On the other hand it is stated in Mr. Tucker's late " Review," that under the present monopoly the price of salt was raised in the March sale of 1822, to 437 Rupees per 100 Maunds, and to 593 Rupees in the May sale of the same year.

The Society of Trade being, as above mentioned, finally abolished in September 1768, the manufacture was thrown open to private merchants and Zemindars, but under restrictions intended to prevent a monopoly of the article, and oppression of the manufacturers.

In 1772, it was determined, 1st, That " the " salt in every part of the province should be " on the same footing. 2d, That the salt " should be made by the Company. 3d, That

* Tucker's Review, p. 53. Mr. Tucker states at the same time the average of 1821-22 together to be 358 Rupees.

Other heads of revenue.

" the Collaries, or manufactories, in each dis-
" trict should be let in farm for five years." The farmers were to deliver the salt at a stipulated price; which was then dealt out at another fixed price to the native conductors of the inland trade.

In 1777, the practice of farming continued: but the salt produced was left to the farmer's disposal.

A new system was introduced in September 1780, "for the provision of salt by agency; " under which all the salt of the provinces " was to be manufactured for the Company, " and sold for ready money at *moderate* fixed " rates, to be ascertained and published at " the beginning of every season by Govern- " ment." The European agents employed to superintend the manufacture, were allowed a commission of 10 per cent on the profit realized to the Company under their management. This commission seems afterwards to have been reduced to 3, and then to 2½ per cent. A comptroller, with assistants, superintended the whole department, subject to the orders of the Revenue Board at Calcutta. The farming system continued till 1786-7; when another change took place, by which the salt manufactured was disposed of at public auction.

Other heads of revenue.

On the introduction of Lord Cornwallis's permanent arrangements in 1793, the salt department was transferred from the superintendence of the Board of Revenue to that of the Board of Trade. In consequence of this transfer, the office of comptroller was abolished, by which the Board of Trade effected a saving in the charges of 60,736 Rupees per annum. The system of agency was continued, and European agents fixed at the under-mentioned stations:

Hidgellee.
Tumlook.
24 Purgunnahs.
Roy Mungul, afterwards united with the 24 Purgunnahs.
Chittagong and Bulwa.

In the investigations made by the Board of Trade into the management of this department, it came out, that two systems prevailed for the manufacture of salt; one a system of coercion, by persons called Adjoora Molungees; and the other by free compact with persons called Ticka Molungees. It appears that the Adjoora Molungees only got about one-half as much for their coerced labour, as was given for the free labour of their Ticka brethren; and that this miserable pittance was neither proportioned to the ordinary rate

Other heads of revenue.

of labour in the country; nor was it sufficient to keep the Adjoora Molungee in common health and strength. The Adjoora Molungees had frequently petitioned to be put on the same footing as the Ticka class, and their case was now strongly recommended to the favourable consideration of Government. At this time there were, in the agencies of Hidgellee and Tumlook alone, no less than 13,388 families in the wretched condition above described; over whom and their ancestors this system of coercion had existed for centuries. The Board of Trade could only account for it by supposing that the Adjooras formerly held lands free, or at a low rate, on condition of furnishing certain quantities of salt at reduced prices, as an equivalent for rent, and that in process of time Zemindars, and others, managed to get the full rent of the lands, without any alteration either in the required supplies, or old prices of salt. Acts of power of this description were common enough, which a depressed peasantry had no means of resisting. The Government General, however, immediately complied with the recommendation of the Board of Trade, so that the Adjooras were raised to the same footing as the Tickas towards the latter end of the year 1794.

It is however much to be apprehended,

that even these rates were an inadequate compensation for the Molungee labour. The agent of the 24 Purgunnahs, says, that the total net earnings to each man at the contract rates, even if the quantity contracted for were fully supplied, would only be six rupees for 7½ months' labour, the time the Molungees were commonly employed in each year in the jungles. Their poverty moreover was such, that this allowance was required to be paid in advance, whilst the quantity of salt engaged for, and on which advances were also made, being almost always deficient, heavy balances remained in each year, not only outstanding, but irrecoverable, and therefore, a real addition *pro tanto* to the price of the salt actually supplied. On these grounds the agent proposed to raise the contract price from 55 Sicca Rupees to 77 Rupees per 100 Maunds, which the Board of Trade and Government assented to. The agent was consequently enabled to manufacture a larger quantity of salt than before at this increased rate, the additional profit on which, fully compensated for the additional prime cost.

In the accounts given of these Aurungs, or places of manufacture, we read of their being liable to drought, inundation and famine; of the manufacture being carried on in uninha-

Other heads of revenue.

bited parts, destitute of fresh water, unhealthy from surrounding jungles, and in which numbers of the Molungees are annually carried off by disease, alligators, and tygers. From these circumstances, it may be also apprehended, that there are grounds for the accusation of this manufacture being still carried on by means of coerced labour. Courts of justice, it is said, have been established for the intended protection of the Molungees; but courts of justice merely tantalize wretches who neither can, or else dare not, prefer a complaint, from the dread of still greater oppression. We may therefore conclude, that the condition of the Molungees is not improved, from what has been very generally admitted, ever since the establishment of the monopoly, to be one of great misery.

In the Fifth Report of the select committee of July 1812, there is a short account of the changes which took place in the administration of the salt department, from the year 1766, to the arrangements adopted by Lord Cornwallis. It hence appears that the revenue derivable from this source was at first only

	Rupees per annum.
about 160,000*l.*,* or	1,300,000

* In the year preceding, or 1765, the revenue, according to Mr. Verelst, (*Vide p.* **637**) was only £120,000, or 960,000 Rupees.

	Rupees per annum.	Other heads of revenue.
In 1780, and three following years under the government of Mr. Hastings, it averaged net . . .	4,000,500	
For three years before Lord Cornwallis' arrival . . . . . do.	4,503,900	
And for three years previous to 1812 . . . . . do.	11,725,700	
In Mr. Tucker's work, on the finances of India, a table is given of the gross receipts from the salt monopoly, contrasted with the costs and charges for 14 years ending in 1821-2; according to these tables, the gross sales will be found to average 17,897,196 Rup. and the charges 5,056,306 Rup.; whence the average *net* revenue of the period will be .	12,840,890	
In the East India accounts submitted to Parliament for 1822-3, to 1825-6 inclusive, the receipts in Bengal averaged 22,694,900 Rupees, and the charges 6,909,524 Rupees, whence the net average of these four years is . . .	15,785,376*	

* Thus far the statement refers to Bengal alone. It may be added that the "Ceded and Conquered provinces" are supplied with rock and other salts from the country beyond the Jumna,

Other heads of revenue.

Rupees per annum.

But in these four years' accounts, we have the gross receipts from salt at the three presidences of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay; and which for the period in question average 25,820,386 Rupees, and the charges 7,708,449; whence the net revenue derivable from the Company's possessions in India, from this monopoly alone, may now be stated at upwards of 18,100,000

The gross revenue, or that levied on the inhabitants, being at the same time, as above stated, 25,820,386 Rupees, or pounds sterl. 2,582,038.

We have here a fair proof of the diligence used by the governments abroad in the "*improvement*" of the public revenue; which would thus appear to have been increased, on one article, about twenty-fold in 60 years. Comparing the sales with the costs and charges in each year, it also appears that the

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and by imports from Lahore and other districts beyond our frontier. A monopoly was attempted to be established in the "Ceded and Conquered provinces," but wholly failed.

Other heads of revenue.

former are more than three and a half times the amount of the latter; that is, salt is only dealt out for sale in quantities to yield the holders of the monopoly a profit of upwards of 250 per cent. on the prime cost. Add to this the necessary profit of the retail merchants, and the result may be shortly summed up as follows. A monopoly of a prime necessary of life to the poor, is established in a pestilential climate, carried on by forced labour, where lives are annually lost by disease, and the attacks of wild beasts; the sole advantage of which is a large revenue to government; the commodity being at the same time retailed at a price certainly not less than 400 or 500, and in many instances more than 500, per cent., above its prime cost to poor inhabitants, from whom we demand in return, or rather in addition, one half of the gross produce of their annual labour as a "*moderate*" land tax.*

* The author of Observations on the Law and Constitution of India has the following remarks on the salt monopoly in Bengal. "The prohibition of European merchants from purchasing salt at the Company's sales has thrown the trade in salt into the hands of a few native monopolists, who regulate the price at will. Government receive about three Rupees per Maund; but the salt is re-sold under their eye at five Rupees in Calcutta by retail, after being adulterated with ten to fifteen per cent. of earth and dirt. The reasons which

OPIUM.

Other heads of revenue.

The opium monopoly had its origin in Mussulman finance.* During the Mogul government, the exclusive privilege was farmed out for a peishcush, or annual payment. On our succeeding to the Dewanny it was granted to individuals as part of the emoluments of certain public offices. In 1773 it was taken by government into their own hands, and let out to contractors. The contract system was continued under the Board of Revenue till 1793, when the management of this department was

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" gave birth to this restriction have long ago ceased to exist. " The restriction is obviously adverse to the interest of the " Company, and no less so to that of the natives, who are now " left at the mercy of a few native dealers. These lately " availed themselves of the power which the restrictive law " gives them to such an extent, that in some districts the price " of salt rose to ten and twelve Rupees per Maund, so that the " poorer classes were compelled to deny themselves the use of " it altogether; a circumstance which distressed the Govern- " ment beyond measure, but they were, for the time at least, " without the means of affording relief." It is remarkable that these observations are made by an intelligent person, who laments at the same time (such is the influence of predilection for established systems) that Government is not permitted to realize from the salt monopoly the " highest advantages" of which it is susceptible.—Obs. p. 121.

* Vide Second Report, p. 21. Fifth ditto, p. 22—25.

transferred to the Board of Trade; by whom a new contract was granted for four years from 1st Sep. 1793, for the provision of opium in Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa. In March 1795, a similar contract was entered into for Benares. On the expiration of the Bengal contract in 1797, the system was changed from contract to agency, such as now prevails, with public sales. At this time the cultivation of the poppy was restricted by regulation to Bahar, and Benares; and positively prohibited in Bengal. In this regulation, further modified in 1807, the cultivation of the opium poppy, is also expressly forbidden, except on account of government.

Other heads of revenue.

Throughout the period of the contracts, compulsory means were used to compel the Ryots to prepare their lands for this particular tillage, and to cultivate the poppy in preference to other articles. After the abandonment of the contract system, the injustice was of an opposite nature. Instead of forcing cultivation, regulations were now passed to prevent "illicit cultivation," and "illicit importations "or traffic in opium." Although under the permanent settlement, the lands in Bengal were given up in full and absolute right to Zemindars, the right was in this respect completely violated to promote the monopoly.

Other heads of revenue.

The injury was most felt in the districts of Rungpore, Purneah, and Boglipore; where, previous to this prohibition, the poppy had been grown for ages, and where it consequently constituted a principal product at the time the lands were permanently settled.

Opium costs the Company in Bengal from 225 to 250 Rupees per chest of 148 lbs. It is sold publicly at stated periods, and with a stipulation that it shall be exported. The sale price formerly averaged about 414 Rupees per chest; but since the establishment of the agency system, and great pains taken to improve the quality of the drug, its price has also progressively risen, so that in 1822-3 it averaged 3090 Sicca Rupees per chest. Its highest price, in March 1822, was 4545 Rupees. The quantity brought to sale annually in Calcutta, is about 4500 chests; of which 2500 are understood to be conveyed to China, and 2000 to the Islands of the Eastern Archipelago.

Mr. Tucker gives a table of the gross receipts from the opium sales, contrasted with the costs and charges, for 14 years, ending as before with 1821-2. The average of the gross receipts for this period is 9,382,363 Rupees per annum, and of the cost and charges 990,738 Rupees. The former, therefore, is

nearly 9½ times the amount of the latter, or in other words, a profit of 850 per cent. on the prime cost of the commodity. Other heads of revenue.

In the four following years it appears from the parliamentary accounts, that both the sales, and the costs and charges, fluctuated exceedingly. It is moreover remarkable, that the cost and charges of these four years give an average of nearly five times that of the former period; whence the profit of these four years, instead of 850 is not 200 per cent. on the prime cost. There are, I believe, no official documents in print to clear up this mysterious change in the state of the opium monopoly; but perhaps it may be accounted for as follows. At the close of the Mahratta war in 1818, Government found itself in possession of a new territory, Malwa, yielding large quantities of opium; and it naturally occurred to our Eastern rulers, that this also must be monopolized. Measures were accordingly taken for the purpose. The traffic in opium was prohibited to individuals. Large advances were made for the cultivation of the article in Malwa, and the whole produce stipulated to be delivered to the Company's agents. For two years out of the before mentioned four, we have a statement of the receipts and charges on account of Malwa opium in the Bombay

Other heads of revenue.

accounts. For 1822-3 and 1823-4, the aggregate sales of these two years "excluding "Malwa opium consigned to Bengal," amount to 15,012,064 Rupees, whilst the cost and charges are no less than 12,827,794; leaving therefore a profit only of 2,184,320 Rupees, or about 13 per cent. A note at the foot of the account informs us, that "the receipts and "charges on account of opium subsequently "to the year 1823-4 are *included in the Bengal* "*accounts;*" and this may explain the magnitude of the charges, and consequently the reduced profit exhibited as above mentioned in the Bengal accounts. The possession of the Malwa opium seems also to have led to the adoption of a new principle in Bengal. Instead of restricting production to certain limits, it is now said to be encouraged. The collectors of the land revenue are appointed to act as deputies to the opium agent, and allowed a commission on any increase of produce raised in their districts * Whether this be a change from bad to better, or from bad to worse, remains to be proved. In the mean time one evil is obvious—it sanctions further intermeddling by collectors and their establishments, in the private affairs and labours of cultivating Ryots.

* Tucker, p. 65.

SECTION XXI.

We have now gone through the principal heads of Indian revenue. The following table is subjoined to shew their aggregate amount as collected under the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. It is compiled from the East India annual revenue accounts laid before Parliament, and printed by order of the House of Commons in May 1828.

ACCOUNT OF THE REVENUES OF BENGAL, MADRAS AND BOMBAY,

UNDER THE RESPECTIVE HEADS, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST ADVICES.

	BENGAL.	MADRAS.	BOMBAY.
	Current Rupees.	Pagodas.	Rupees.
Mint or coinage duties and profits	304,788	22,125	39,998
Post-office collections	791,328	74,236	140,305
Stamp duties	1,867,853	153,759	150,186
Judicial fees and fines and licenses for exclusive privileges	804,455	283,207	675,810
Customs	3,494,166	464,116	1,167,658
Land and Sayer revenues *	92,776,833	12,862,176	17,632,366
Sale of salt	21,394,690	404,041	148,469
Ditto opium	9,398,910		in Bengal account.
Marine-receipts for pilotage, moorings, light house, &c.	363,558	23,627	155,369
	131,196,581	14,287,287	20,110,161
Or at 2s. the current Rupee; 8s. the Pagoda, and 2s. 3d. the Bombay Rupee, £. sterling	13,119,658	5,714,915	2,262,393
Total of the three Presidencies, for 1824-5			21,096,966
In July, 1828, further accounts having been received, the total revenues of India for 1825-6, are stated to be			£21,128,388
And estimated for 1827, at			22,782,350

* This line contains the aggregate amount of receipts stated under separate heads in the parliamentary accounts, viz.

In the Bengal account—land and Sayer revenues from Bengal, Behar, and Orissa—Benares—Ceded provinces in Oude—Conquered provinces—and Ceded territory on the Nerbuddah.

In the Madras account—from ancient possessions including the Circars and Jaghire lands—from the Carnatic—Tanjore—Ceded and conquered provinces, Mysore, Malabar, &c.—countries ceded by the Nizam—and subsidy from Mysore, Travancore and Cochin.

And in the Bombay account, from ancient possessions—Provinces ceded by the Guicowar—and provinces ceded by, or conquered from, the Mahrattas.

The most prominent feature of the preceding statement—and the coincidence is curious—is that even the financial operations of the East India Company bear throughout the character of monopoly. The land revenue in India is a complete monopoly of all that can be called rent. The mere driblet allowed to Zemindars under the permanent settlement can, as far as the principle of it goes, only be considered in the light of an allowance conceded to a farmer of revenue, or a moderate salary to a responsible public servant. If he help himself to more, it is because the ruling power is unable to prevent it. But the Ryotwar settlement has not even this meagre plea. There the whole rent is avowedly absorbed by a self created sovereign proprietor. The other principal heads of revenue are salt and opium, which are close monopolies; as well as the exclusive privileges to sell betel nut, tobacco, and spirituous liquors, which are included in this statement, in the same line, it is said, with judicial fees and fines; but partly I apprehend in others.* In this way

* There must be some error in this part of the official statement. We have no separate statement of the proceeds of the Abkaree, or liquor monopoly; but in a minute of Mr. Colebrooke's (Beng. Rev. Sel. Vol. I. p. 196), it is stated that the

twenty one millions sterling are annually drawn from the sweat and labour of an impoverished people, by as grinding a system of taxation as ever was inflicted on the human race—a system, alas! in which we "look for "judgment but behold oppression, for right- "eousness but behold a cry."

Abkary, or tax on spirituous liquors, had been increased from 34,602 Rupees in 1790-1 to 834,695 Rupees, the amount realized in 1812; and in Lord Moira's revenue minute (p. 434) the revenue derived by government from this source in the western provinces alone, including Benares, is stated to be 1,000,000 Rupees.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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380 ....13 from bottom, *for* avail, *read* value.
467 .... 3 *for* five, *read* four.
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